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Floating to Fortune; Or, Which was the Hero?

By JAMES REYNOLDS.

CHAPTER IV.

A SCION OF THE TRIBE OF SHODDY.

"JULIUS CÆSAR," demanded Augustus Jefferson, the morning subsequent to the conversation detailed in the preceding chapter, "you were sober and I was not—at least, it was your duty to be. Now, where was I last night, and at what hour did I crawl into my bed this morning?"

The speaker, a would-be dandy, but an unmitigated idiot, who affected fast horses, strong brandy, stronger cigars, and the faro and the billiard-table, was the picture of a dissipated caricature of manhood. He was full of pretension and destitute of every virtue.

In his eyes nobleness of character was a vulgarity of which no gentleman ought to be guilty; and supercilliousness an undefined something worth struggling after.

Augustus Jefferson yawned as he spoke, and then, with a trembling hand, attempted to adjust his moustache—a pose, this affair, which he cultivated with assiduity.

"Now, Julius Cæsar," he resumed, "tell me what a devil of a fellah I was last night. Did I set a good example to the other fellahs, and was I very drunk?"

"Yes, Marse 'Gustus," replied the negro, "yousе was jes' gloriously drunk. You didn't know nuff to stan' up, an' I had to carry yo' to yo' carridge, an' I had to pay de ferries to Jo'sey City an' back, as well as to dis place, out ob my pocket, kase you spent de last red cent you hab a-fightin' dat tiger in de Jo'seys, sah. Dat tiger skin you."

"Why, Julius, was I in Jersey City? What could have taken me over to that confounded hole?"

"Well, sah, I tole you how you done gone an' did it. You fus' went to dat gam'lin'-house in Broadway, near Canal Street. Yousе jes' 'bout bad drunk den, an' you had lots ob money. You pocketbook was stickin' out all 'roun' wif bank-bills an' gold. I s'pect you lef' some ob dat small change at dem gam'lin'-tables in Broadway, fo' when yo' cum out ob de house wif dat tall, dark-eyed, an' stern lookin' gemmen, was yo' 'sisted on introducin' to me as Marse Henry Burt, of Virginny, you growled mighty, an' said dey didn't play a squa' game up dar, an' dot dey skinned yo' 'live."

"Well, they do pluck pigeons there," said Augustus Jefferson, complacently.

He really enjoyed the history of his debauch as the coachman told it. "But, Julius Cæsar," he added, "before you rehearse any more of my exploits, first get me one of these half-pint bottles of champagne. My nerves are not steady, and I must brace 'em up, for I've got a challenge at billiards for a cool five hundred a side to-night, with that fellah, Bill Walker."

Julius removed the cork from the bottle, and, it being sufficiently clear, poured the wine into a goblet. It was eagerly swallowed by the dissipated youth, who showed no inclination to rise and make his toilet for the day.

"I'se heard ob dat gem'man, Massa Walker," Julius ventured to remark, "an' dey do say, sah, dat he kin make dem balls go roun' and roun' de table jes' as if dey was livin' t'ings. If you doesn't look out, sah, I s'pect youse get dat five hundred taken from yo'."

"Oh, I can beat him easily, you nigger," returned the brilliant Augustus. "If I get a run on him, he's a goner. But what took me to Jersey City?"

"You went ober wif dat Colonel Henry Burt, as he calls himse'f," answered Julius, quietly. "He hab some fas' horses he wanted to show you. You was talkin' hoss, sah. W'en youse seed dem racers ob de gem'man's you bet him five t'ousan' dollars dat you could fine a hoss dat'd beat anyt'ing he could induce on de tuff two time out ob free."

"The deuce I did!" exclaimed Mr. Jefferson, leaping out of bed. "Did I make such a—a confounded fool of myself? Five thousand dollars!"

"Yes, sah, sho'. An' w'at's mo', you wanted to bet ten t'ousand dollars, an' would have done it only dat funny gem'man, w'at dey calls Massa Dick Price, got yo' a-laffin' 'bout suffin', an' den you fell down dead-drunk on de flo' ob Taylor's Hotel. I came to de c'lusion dat you'd had nuff fo' one night, an' lifted you up an' put you 'way in de carridge."

Great drops of perspiration stood on the young man's brow.

They glistened like transparent glass beads in the light.

"Fetch my coat, nigger," said Augustus, his nether lip trembling.

"Yes, sah."

The colored coachman handed the garment to his master.

Augustus Jefferson merely passed a hand into the pocket inserted in the right breast, and removed therefrom a large morocco wallet. Trumbtily he opened it. In turn he searched each of its receptacles, and found them all empty of money.

"THE BOAT WAS LOWERED IN A MINUTE, AND WHILE THE MEN IN HER PULLED VIGOROUSLY AND WITH A WILL FOR THE 'OBJECT' THAT MOVED SO SILENTLY TOWARD THE NARROWS, THE VESSEL WAS BROUGHT TO."

READ OUR NEW STORIES.

"By George!" he muttered, "I must have cut a heavy swell! What's this?" he added, on observing a slip of white paper folded up and lying in a pocket.

Dropping the empty wallet on the floor, he opened the paper, and to his consternation found that he had made an arrangement to run against any racer in Colonel Henry Burt's stable an unknown horse for a purse of five thousand dollars, one thousand forfeit, to be then and there paid to John Jollison, of Virginia, who was appointed stakeholder.

"Well, I'll be smothered! I begin to suspect I'm what my old preceptor, Doctor Neilson, called me—an undeveloped fool. Two thousand dollars run out of me in one night! Julius, give me some more champagne. I want a pint of it to straighten me up. Two thousand dollars! And who the deuce is John Jollison, of Virginia?"

The negro handed his master the beverage; and as before, he swallowed it at a draught.

"Ha! I begin to feel better now. Decidedly, eh? I'll find an animal that'll outrun anything this Burt can put up. But who's he? Burt—Burt, and John Jollison? Five thousand dollars aside! Phew! I must have been jolly drunk!"

"I s'pects I knows suffin' oh Marsa Henry Burt, sah," remarked Julius, in a quiet way.

"You do, you nigger!" cried Jefferson, as he essayed to dress himself. "Then who is he?"

"He is de presen' owner ob Corn Hill plantation, on de James River, 'way high up, near de Blue Ridge hills, sah. His brudder, w'ats gone dead, used to own it, an' it's a mighty big place, wif lots ob nigguhs on it. My mudder was born on it, sah; an' I s'pece so was I."

"You were, eh?" queried Mr. Jefferson.

"I t'inks so, sah."

"Then you know this Colonel Burt?" questioned Augustus Jefferson, as doubts of the integrity of his servant entered his suspicious mind, his white eyes assuming a cat-like expression.

"Neber saw de gemman afo' in my life, sah, dat I knows ob. My mammy and granny was sold off de 'state wen I was pleasaney, sah. I tole you, sah, I was 'stonished wen I seed him."

"And the man that's got my money, who's he?"

"Don't know, sah. He look to me, sah, like one ob dem chaps w'at you gem'men call a duelemist, an' want dar honor attended to ebery now an' den."

"He's got my thousand dollars," growled Jefferson.

"Yes, sah. An' dem geminen in Broadway's got de oder, I s'pects," suggested the negro. "It's lucky, sah, dat dat Marsa Richard Price was 'roun' last night at Taylor's, in Jersey City, or else you'd been done gone for anoder heap ob money. Dot Marsa Price is de funniest gemman I eber seed. He spoke ob you, sah."

"What did he say?" demanded Jefferson.

"He say, sah," said Julius, with a deprecatory air, "an' you won't be angry wif me for sayin' ob it, sah?"

"No, no! What was it?"

"Dat ef you didn't run away from de forfeit money, an' luff dem sharpers alone, dot dey ought to serve you as dey did Johnny Coswell down in Connetemout."

"What did they do with him?"

"Hung him, sah, fo' bein' de wisest man in de State."

Augustus Jefferson was wild with indignation.

He seized some of his boots and threw it at the head of his servant.

It struck with great force, but, fortunately for the negro, his skull was too thick to be hurt by it.

Putting on an injured air, Julius said:

"Marsa 'Gustus, yo' gib me yo' wod as a gemman dat you wouldn't get mad wif me ef I tole you wat dat funny pusson, Marsa Price, tole me."

"Did I?" growled Jefferson. "Well, I'll keep my word. Give me another swig of that wine."

While Augustus Jefferson was indulging in his third potation a house-servant rapped upon the chamber-door.

"Who's there?" demanded the young man.

"A card, sir, for you." was the answer.

"Open the door, Julius Cæsar, and hand it to me."

"Yes, sah!" and the coachman, upon doing as he had been bidden, was given a square business-card, on which was printed, "Richard Price, No. 210 Nassau Street, Attorney and Counselor-at-Law." On the back of it was written, in a large, loose hand, "Dick Price would like to see A. Jefferson, Esq."

"Dick Price!" repeated Jefferson. "What the deuce does he want with me?"

"Dat's the funny lookin' young gemman, sah, I tole yo' of w'at helped me to put yo' in de carridge las' night, an' saved yo' from goin' ten thousand on dem horses of Massa Burt's."

"Is it? Well, ask him to come up here an' I'll talk to him. I wonder what he wants?" mused Augustus.

A moment later and Richard Price, the junior light of the Price family, entered the chamber. There was a quizzical look in his eyes that at first slightly irritated, and then excited to humor, the receiver of the call.

His nerves were steady now, and he was prepared to lose his five hundred dollars at billiards.

"Excuse me, Mr. Jefferson," said Dick Price, in a solemn and measured voice, "for calling upon you. I didn't expect to find your head level before this hour of the day. I say, you were fearfully blown last night. Hadn't it been for that nigger and myself, you'd a been the most plucked gander in this part of the country to-day. Say, do you know you were in the hands of a couple of respectable sharpers who were preparing to pull your eye-teeth out, and you'd never have known it except through your pocket-book, which was about as skimpy a moneyed institution after a heavy run as I've seen in some time! See here, Jefferson, if you train long with the fellers that have roped you in, there won't be money enough at the end of the dance they'll lead you to buy a cord stout enough to hang yourself with; and you wouldn't make a bad-looking corpse."

"You're complimentary, Mr. Price," said Jefferson.

"Yes, sir. Always am when I see the makings of a good fellow going to the devil. Excuse me for saying it—you think yourself smart. But you ain't. You're a donkey. I speak this out of kindness to you, old boy. But I've come here to say something to you. First, let me whisper, in confidence, that I've seen some papers—law papers—which satisfy me that that stern-looking customer, Burt, is not only a blackleg but a cheat, and that that John Jollison isn't a hundred per cent. better. John Jollison, by legal tricks and devices, succeeded, not very many years ago, in getting the upper hand of a lady named St. John, who was once in excellent circumstances in Virginia, but who at present resides in Brooklyn with her daughter, a young girl—say between fourteen and fifteen years—who labors daily in a bindery in New York for a pittance that is barely sufficient, now that she has lost her adopted brother by drowning—and by the-way, my governor's umbrella went with him into the river—to keep their souls and bodies together."

Augustus Jefferson's face was now aglow. He was evidently pleasurably excited.

"Mrs. St. John, the handsome, stately widow who resides in Pacific Street, and her pretty daughter, Alice? I know them—that is, I've seen 'em, and I've long wanted an introduction to 'em."

Dick Price's face grew dark. His queer eyes assumed a strange expression.

"Mr. Jefferson," he said, "you mistake. You do not know the lady and her daughter. Take my advice and never look for an introduction there, unless you would be taught a severe lesson. The lady's name ought not to have been spoken by me; but, should it ever be your bad fortune to be placed in her society, you will feel uncomfortable."

"Why, sir, why?" demanded Jefferson, pushing his interrogatory.

Dick Price laughed.

His mood had suddenly changed.

"Well, I'll tell you. She has, unfortunately, a business for tools, and, you see, she might, at first sight, take you for one."

"Do you mean to insult me, sir?" cried the brilliant Jefferson.

"Not at all," answered Dick, in his drollest voice. "I'm here to do you a favor, to tell you that you are a tom-cod in the midst of a school of sharks, and that if you do not look out, there won't be enough of you left in a month to be recognized anywhere. As for John Jollison and Henry Burt, I'll see to them myself. Good-by, for the present."

Dick Price abruptly left the room, and Augustus Jefferson fell into a brown study.

CHAPTER V.

ABOUT PAPERS AND LADIES.

TWISTED and doubled-up like a jack-knife, and then curled away in the oddest possible manner, Dick Price, on the night preceding Christmas, had worked his fat, dumpy body into the governor's study chair in the private room of the office at No. 210 Nassau Street, the chamber where clients were confidentially consulted and witnesses for the parties in litigation, for whom Mr. Price, senior, was retained, put through their preliminary examinations.

Master Richard, from the rueful manner in which he appeared to be meditating, did not seem to be particularly rejoiced at the near return of that season in midwinter when all the Christian world prepares for the renewal of good-fellowship and the festivities that accompany it.

Nothing, however, could be further from the fact.

Dick was, indeed, running over with the milk of human kindness—of personal happiness.

His father had that morning presented him with the usual holiday present—it had come to him this time in the form of a crisp one hundred dollar bank-note—and he was "planning," as he remarked to himself, how, with all becoming delicacy, he could bestow a portion of it in a quarter in which he knew it was very much needed, but where tact was required in order to insure its acceptance.

"Confound this sensitiveness," he growled. "I ain't delicate in the matter of money, and I don't see why other people having stomachs to fill and backs to cover should hesitate about receiving it. It's money makes the female of the genus equine more gayty over the avenues, down Broadway and through Wall Street; and it's the promise thereof that puts wrinkles in my respectable progenitor's kindly old face and makes the pot boil. Now, that respectable darkey, Julius Cæsar, if you present him with a dollar, he'll grimace all over, and in saying 'Tank yo', sah,' will open his mouth so wide that one is tempted to put his head in it to see it, upon closing his jaws, he will bite it off. It would be the easiest thing in the world to decapitate in this manner the pippin his master, that Augustus Jefferson, carries upon his shoulders. And just to think! the idiot desires an introduction to Mrs. Ruth St. John and her pretty daughter Alice! When he gave that out, I felt like punching his head—no his pantaloons!"

Dick put a hand in his trowsers pocket, and then withdrawing a handsome wallet, proceeded to open it in a leisurely way, his countenance expressing, as the negro would say, "funny things."

Suddenly it he took the bank-note, and the few words that accompanied it, written in his father's straggling hand.

"The gov's a trump," he murmured; "here's what he says:"

"MY DEAR SON: You've been a good boy during the year, very attentive to business, and very seldom in need of things, only you're so odd. It's a hundred, Dick."

"The father of Richard Price, Jr., is a sensible gentleman, also. Now, he knows I wanted money. But for what, I'll bet him the entire bill, without any discount, he couldn't guess, not once in a hundred times. Ah, now I've got it. This note tells me what to do. I'll write to her and inclose a "fifty." That'll do it. No, it won't. She wouldn't use it, however urgent her necessities, if it came to her from an anonymous or unknown source. And yet she must have it. That girl—Alice—is not strong, and Mrs. St. John makes a precarious livelihood, at the best, with her needle. I'd like to be 'spited' like that blind old hag over in Hoboken, to whom Julius introduced me. Ah! I have it this time, sure. There's sister Mattie. Why not? I'll get her to write the delicate, boarding-school hand of hers, a note full of apologies and explanations, at the same time giving her the impression that it comes from an old friend, whose name will ultimately be made known, and with it will go the fifty. Eureka! I've found out how to do it. I'm a philosopher, I am, and I'm happy. But it's a wonder the old gentleman never reminded me of that umbrella? I see he's got a new one—and it's of silk. He's getting proud in his old age. Mrs. St. John and Allie provided for, I'll eat a jolly Christmas dinner. Little Dick Price, as very nice, went for his Christmas pie, he put in a thumb and pulled out a plumb, said what a good boy am I! But isn't it strange the body of poor Tom Burt has not been found? It's two weeks now since that foggy night. I suppose a wheel of the boat must have struck him, and then he went down, down to the bottom of the river, and thence the undercurrent carried his remains to the sea. Tom was a first-class swimmer. He was like a fish in the water. But it was too cold for him. Yes, if he hadn't sunk he would have answered to the many signals that were made. Poor Tom! if he had been Mrs. St. John's son she could not have loved him more dearly, or he her and Alice—the latter as a sister, of course."

And when Dick uttered these words it was fortunate no one was present. Dick positively blushed.

A signal of admittance was at this moment given at the outer door to the office.

"Come in!" cried Dick, as he uncoiled and untwisted himself, and finally got out of the chair. "I suppose it's one of those logics of the governor's, who don't know that the courts have adjourned for the holidays. Well, I must entertain him."

He repeated, as the signal for the second time was made on a panel, "Come in!" And, in an unobtrusive, "Don't be bashful."

The door swung widely open. Within the framing it, hat in hand, stood the dark form and black, shining, genial face of Julius Cæsar.

"Hollo, Snowball! is that you, old chap? Come in and make yourself at home," cried Dick Price.

"Yes, sah," laughingly answered the coachman. "I'se jes' dat same Snowball. An', w'at's mo', I'se come fo' to see yo' 'bout dem papers of granny. Kl! Massa Price, I'se got dem wif me. De ole woman didn't know de diffurnence. I gub her de bundle w'at you gub me, an' she put it 'way satisfied dat it was de same 'dentical one she's been totin' 'bout wif her eber sense she let Va'ginny. S'pects you'll take de 'mos' kar' ob dem, Massa Richard."

Dick gave his long face a peculiar screw. This caused the negro to again show his white teeth, and to think what a "funny gemman" his new acquaintance was.

"Price, junior, said;

"Well, you bet I will, Julius. I'm interested in this case. I may say I'm personally interested."

"S'pects so, sah," responded the coachman, with great gravity of manner.

Dick again blushed.

"What do you mean to insinuate, you unfortunate imp of satin?" he comically demanded.

Comical in appearance only. He was seriously annoyed by what he supposed was a belief of the negro's.

"See here, Julius," he resumed, after a short pause, during which the coachman put his hat to his face to hide it from the scrutiny of the speaker, so convulsed was he with laughter, "no more of that 'an thou lovest me.' I have taken a real solid interest in Mrs. St. John and her daughter, because they were the friends of my dead and gone chum, Tom Burt, who, if he had his rights, would be licking you at this hour on his plantation; and because I believe, having read these documents, that Jollison, conspiring with Henry Burt, has swindled them out of their fortune."

"Dat's jes' de truf yo' spokes, Massa Richard," interjected the negro, his face assuming an admiring expression.

"Now," continued Dick, "I propose interesting my father in this matter. If he finds grounds for action, and he's a just man, he'll put those fellows through an unmistakable course of sprouts. But to me, ever since you brought the matter to my notice, there seems to be a special Providence in the old woman toting them with her when she left the plantation. It's as clear as the nose on your face—no, on mine, for you haven't got enough to speak respectfully of—that that Henry Burt cheated his nephew Tom, out of his patrimony. Don't suppose for that he can't be touched now. If Tom were to the fore, wouldn't there be lots of chin-music among the lawyers in the courts, and wouldn't the newspapers be jolly over it?"

"Dat's so, I 'spect, Massa Richard," responded the negro. "But gub me 'mission to say dat w'en yo' am in de company ob Massa Jeff'son yo' ought to keep yo' mouf as close as a clam's at high water. 'Cause why—he tell dem gemmen from Va'ginny ebery night w'en he am full of liquor. W'en yo' said de oder day 'bout dem he tole 'em las' night, an' I toles yo', sah, w'en dey hearn it dey look sharp at each other. I was dar, sah."

"What a donkey that Jefferson is!" murmured Price. "Yes," he added, in a louder key, "you are right there. I ought not to have opened my mouth. It may set them to thinking—put them on the alert. Well, let that go. How did Jefferson get outwith that billiard match for the five hundred the other night? I haven't heard."

"He was drunk's usual, an' he lose, sah," answered the negro.

"I expected as much," muttered Dick. "Jefferson, as the professionals say, can handle a cue pretty well when he's on his legs. But he's the easiest thing in the world to get him off them. I can play a fair game myself, but he can discount me straight along when sober. Drunk, I can walk around him. By how much was he beaten?"

"Dey say dat he was whipped by about ninety points in de five hunder', sah."

"That fellow 'll die in an almshouse if he lives long enough. How about his bet of five thousand with Burt?"

"He's lookin' fo' a boss, sah," replied the coachman, with a grin. "Dar's a Kentuck' racer w'at's said to be mighty smart on his legs, but his owner say he won't put him on de course under five t'ousand dollars."

"Then he's bound to lose, any way," said Dick, with a laugh. "He'd better pay for'ard and retire to—ah asylum for the cure of the idiotic."

The negro grinned.

Dick donned his hat, and was about to put his great-coat on his back, when the door, without any previous signal, swung open, and a young and quite prepossessing girl entered.

She was fashionably dressed.

There was something about her air—her manner, rather than her features—that impressed the negro with the idea that the new-comer and "dem Dicks" were nearly related—were, perhaps, brother and sister. Even she had a touch of the young man's eccentricity in her carriage.

Julius had the good sense to rise and retire.

"Hello!" cried Richard, junior. "Mat, is that you?"

"Do you want my deliberate opinion on the subject, as father says?" demanded the young lady.

"Bother, no! I'll take it for granted that it is you," he half grunted. "Know, miss, I'm ever so glad you've come over. But what could have induced you to venture out to-day—above all the days in the year—a fashionable lady like you?"

"Charity compelled me, sir."

"Charity?"

"I came a-begging, sir. I want you to loan me fifty dollars."

"Haven't be given you a present?"

"Only a pitiful hundred dollars," she answered. "What's that, when you set your heart on a new ball-dress and a nice hat?"

"Oh, the extravagance of the age!" the young man cried, turning his eyes upward until only the whites of them could be seen. "Are all young ladies as extravagant as you are?"

"Extravagant, Dick!" she repeated. "Why, I pride myself on being economical—some of my lady friends say I am stingy."

"Do they?" mumbled Dick. "Then I'll never marry."

"Don't—that's a good boy. At least not until I'm blessed with a rich husband."

"Why not, Mat?"

"Because, when you go into business, like pa, and make money, I'll draw upon you. Won't that be nice?"

"For you—yes."

"Of course. What's the use of having a brother if you cannot use him?"

The junior Richard groaned.

"Mat, I'll tell you how you can earn ten dollars in ten minutes, if you'll promise never to say a word about it, unless by my permission."

"How?"

"By writing, in your neatest style, a note to a lady."

"A lady!" cried Miss Price. "Ha! ha! Is that the quarter in which the wind blows? And what of the extravagance now, Sir Richard?"

Dick Price blushed like a peony.

"Nonsense, Mat," he finally replied. "You know I'm cut out for an old bachelor. You've told me so a thousand times. The lady I desire the note to be written to is nearly—perhaps quite—old enough to be your mother. She's in distress. But she's a refined, sensitive woman, and would shriek from eleemosynary relief."

"Pray, who is she?" demanded Miss Price. "I declare, Dick, you have excited my curiosity."

"You remember the accident which occurred about ten or twelve days ago on the Fulton Ferry boat *Nassau*, during the fog? The newspapers were full of it. They told how a boy, one Thomas Burt, was pushed overboard and drowned, and how his sister would have shared his fate had not a young gentleman, who shall be nameless here, grasped her as she was falling forward. The boy's body has not yet been found."

"Of course, Dick, I remember all about it. It makes me shudder every time I think of it, because you were on board. You must never go on a boat again in a fog."

"The boy was the adopted son, or foster-son, of the woman I desire to assist. That boy was my friend. He was a poor factory lad, but he was a gentleman. He was," added Dick, "the main support of his mother. The girl's name is Alice. She is a refined, intelligent young lady. But I fear she's not long for this world. She coughs sometimes as if she were going into a decline. Now you know all that is necessary you should know of the lady and her daughter at this time. Will you promise me secrecy in this matter? I can depend on you?"

"You can, Dick," answered his sister, in a better tone than she had yet employed. Her sympathies were aroused.

"Now sit here and get your woman's wits to work," Dick resumed. "Write me a note—I'll help to dictate it, but correct me if I go out of the way—that will in no sense be offensive to its recipient. In that note I propose inclosing a fifty-dollar banknill."

Miss Price was inspired.

In a few minutes she had prepared the rough draft of a letter, which, it seemed to her brother, covered the entire ground.

He requested her to copy it in her best chirography, while he went to a money-changer's and had his hundred-dollar note broken into bills of suitable denominations.

Upon his return, he reread the note; then, upon folding it, inclosed the fifty dollars he had promised himself to transmit to Mrs. St. John.

When the missive and the money had been placed in an envelope, and that sealed and superscribed by his sister, Dick said to her:

"Mattie, you are a trump. You did that well. I'm proud of you. Here's twenty outside of the ten dollars I promised you. I wish I could give you the fifty. If I did I'd be out in the cold, you know, for weeks, and, by George, as it is I'll have to economize."

The young girl put away from her the hand containing the promised recompense, now doubled, and hastily rising to her feet, and quite regardless of her elaborately arranged toilet, flung her arms around her brother's neck and fondly kissed him upon the forehead, cheeks and lips, while her eyes were blinded with tears.

"You are a good, noble fellow, Dick," she almost sobbed. "Oh, I love you better than I ever did before in all my life; and I would never forgive myself if I took from you a cent of that you now have."

Richard, junior, was deeply affected at this unlooked-for demonstration of sisterly affection, and not knowing what else to say, the clumsy fellow cried:

"Mattie! Mattie! don't, that's a dear girl. Won't you, by crying, wash all the paint from your face?"

The girl laughed and took the money.

CHAPTER VI.

IN THE SHEEN OF THE MOON.

WHEN Tom Burt found himself falling from the stern of the *Nassau*, with a coolness and a decision which might be pronounced heroic, he made up his mind if the dense fog which prevailed—shutting out objects from the vision which were not many feet distant—that there was small chance of his ever reaching land.

How far he sank beneath the surface of the river he could not tell. It seemed to him before he rose again to the air that he must have touched the bottom, before his self-possession never forsook him. His fear was that he might rise near the boat, and possibly be struck by a bucket of one of the revolving wheels, and so made an end of.

To prevent any such catastrophe, while yet under water, he succeeded in removing his boots and his Winter coat, swimming, as he hoped, away from the craft.

It should not be forgotten that the youth was an excellent swimmer. In fact, if he could not come out first, he assuredly could remain under water longer than hundreds of his years.

He did not fear the water, therefore. He did the boat and the fog.

Somehow, he felt that he alone was forced into the lake—that Alice was saved by some projecting hand—and even in his own imminent danger he was glad that it was so. It gave him strength both of body and purpose.

He heard the wheels of the ferry-boat turning slowly, sometimes stopping, and, he thought, also, voices calling to him. But he could not be quite sure of that. Then there came a dull sound, as if from some far-away bell, crying:

"Be of good cheer! be of good cheer! be of good cheer!"

"I am!" he mentally exclaimed. "I'll save myself if I can. If I sink to the bed of the river a corpse it will be God's will, and I must not complain."

After a time he rose to the surface to breathe. He found the air quite chilly.

Intently he listened for some cry, some signal from the shore or the boat, but none came to him except the clang and toll of the alarm-bell.

It had a muffled sound to his ears, and all the while it seemed as if it were withdrawing—going further and further away from him.

He strove, with all his might, to fix the place whence the sound proceeded. But it came to him from every side, as it, as it called out, "Be of good cheer." It was swinging round a great circle.

Strange, this! He could not understand it. He had forgotten where he was. He began to think that he was not in the river—was not floating between two great cliffs, but far, far away—leagues from the solid land, floating and struggling in mid-ocean. And all the time the song came to him, "Be of good cheer!"

The tide was at the turn. It was rushing with fearful force toward the sea.

Of this Burt was ignorant.

There was but one boat running and but one bell tolling, and from it he was constantly receding.

So accustomed was he to the water that he kept afloat with scarce an effort on his part.

But he would not tax his energies too much until he knew when to strike out with vigor and precision.

In this he was wise, and in it he was also foolish.

It is true he husbanded his strength, but the cold water numbed him, and he grew drowsy.

It is certain he lost consciousness for a time.

The tide carried him onward, onward.

Swiftly through Buttermilk Channel, which separates Brooklyn from Governor's Island, he was swept.

He began to feel as if he were gliding, seated on the back of some monstrous bird, whose wings were as a canopy, through ether. The motion seemed to be delightful.

His eyes were filled with the reflections of beautiful things.

The clouds appeared to him to be of purple, and gold and silver, and the islands he saw everywhere were tropical in their character, and between and beneath the branches of umbrageous groves he saw lovely maidens and majestic men passing to and fro.

He recognized them, but he felt they perceived not his presence.

He was in the bay now.

The night was advancing.

The cold was steadily increasing.

Two hours and upward had he been in the water and floating on its surface!

Could the body of the youth longer endure the effects of the water and of the cold?

His dreams were pleasant, indeed.

He cared not to be other than he then was.

Had he had his choice, he would, doubtless, much rather have floated onward—onward until he had reached the gates of Eternity, than be brought back to the harassing activities of life.

The fog had now lifted its white wings, and, as the sea-breeze came in, darted inwardly toward the land, and presently disappeared.

Then the full-orbed moon and the myriad stars came forth.

In the sheen of the lunar rays his body floated.

All around it the water leaped and corruscated, as if it were composed of infinitely small crystals burnished with silver; and on its bosom it carried vast sheets of diamond-dust.

Near the silvery track a brigantine was moving slowly—almost in the teeth of the wind—seaward.

The lookout, stationed on the port side of the forecastle, saw a dark object in the water. It was within a biscuit's throw of him.

Yes; there could be no mistake. Turned toward the moon, the eyes closed, was a young face! How pale, how ghastly it looked!

The man hailed the master of the vessel, who, in the first watch, was meditatively pacing the poop-deck.

"Man overboard, sir!" he cried.

The widow, with its burden, startled the crew, who were below.

With a bound they were upon the main deck and looking over the larboard taffrail into the water.

"Where away!" mechanically demanded the skipper, as he, too, moved to the port side.

"In the track of the moon, sir," returned the outlook.

Fortunately, the commander of the brigantine was humane.

He did not stop to debate whether the body he saw floating in the tide—reposing so quietly on the water—was of the living or of the dead.

"Lower away the gig!" he cried, "and a couple of you men go with her and bring on board that object over there. I've a notion that there is life in that body, and I think it's a boy's."

The boat was lowered in a minute, and while the men in her pulled vigorously and with a will for the object that moved so silently toward the Narrows, the vessel was brought to.

The body was gently lifted out of the water by the strong arms of the stalwart seamen and laid in an easy position in the boat, the prow of which was turned toward the brigantine.

On its approach a whip was erected, and the boy gently raised to the deck.

The skipper kneeled down, and placing a brawny hand upon the cold, limp body near the region of the heart, kept it there for a few seconds.

"There is a flutter here," he murmured. "It is a fair lad. He may yet be saved. Carry him to the cabin, Stewart," he added; "get out some blankets and brandy, and tell the cook to put on a kettle of water and boil it."

The men obeyed the instructions of the captain with alacrity.

The body was stripped of its clothing and thoroughly dried, and then rubbed until at length the skin began to glow under the unremitting friction.

Next it was wrapped in the blankets, and upon being lifted into a berth, bottles containing hot water were applied to the soles of the feet.

The respiration now gradually began to increase in force and regularity, and once or twice the eyes opened, but there was no speculation in them.

"We'll bring the lad round all right," said the skipper, exultingly. "He's a handsome youngster."

It was now near the break of day.

The men of the brigantine had been assiduous, through the long night in their efforts to restore the boy to consciousness.

The master of the vessel never left the side of the berth in which lay Tom Burt, and he occasionally placed between his yet pale lips a drop of brandy to stimulate the system into a healthier action.

The youth, however, perhaps from pure physical exhaustion quite as much as from unconsciousness, lay perfectly still.

There had been a great darkness upon him; he seemed in a hazy way to think. But now that all was passed, and he felt himself in some pleasant place, he could not say precisely where, and he wanted just to rest there and be no more disturbed.

Finally he opened his large, fine eyes, and looked lazily around him.

First he stared into the face of the captain, and then in turn at each of the men who had served him; and when cheerfully and encouragingly spoken to, looked again, but there seemed to be no recognition in his eyes. Nor did he appear to hear the words that were uttered. His senses were dulled. That was evident.

Then the eyes closed again, and the rescued passed into a profound slumber, from which he did not awaken for many hours.

"He'll do all right now, boys," said the master, cheerfully, "if they leave him with perfect safety. Follow his example, as I shall do. Turn in and sleep like tops until the dog-watch."

Toward morning the wind veered around to west by north, and as it gradually freshened to a good standing-sail breeze all the canvas possible was put out, and the swift *Isabella*, seeming, to rejoice in her speed, bowled along in the course that had been laid out for her at the rate of ten knots an hour.

Her destination was South America, on the Pacific Ocean.

It had been Captain Tronsom's intention, when Tom Burt was first taken on board, to place him on some returning pilot-boat and have him landed in New York.

It so happened, however, that no boat or inward-bound vessel of any kind was hailed; and when the critical condition of the youth was considered, the good-hearted skipper thought it perhaps as well to keep him where he was.

"I suppose his parents 'll be worried about him," he remarked, "but I don't like to put him out of the ship as he is. Perhaps it is as well that they should be troubled a little now than maybap lose him entirely by fever and death. When he's all right I'll make him handy at something. I like his looks. It seems to me as if I'd been in his company afore, but I can't say where, and that bothers me."

Toward the afternoon Tom awoke from his long sleep, fully restored to health.

He looked wonderingly, eagerly around him.

He saw that he was on board of some vessel, and, from her movements, judged she was under canvas.

"This is odd!" he exclaimed. "How did I get here? Where am I? Am I asleep? Am I dreaming?"

He paused to collect his thoughts.

Then it suddenly flashed upon him his being tumbled into the water from the *Nassau* ferry-boat on her passage while in a dense fog, and his going down—down to the very bed of the river.

All the rest was an indistinct dream, and quite kaleidoscopic.

"I suppose I must have been picked up by the good people on board. But how comes it," and the boy glanced through the cabin-window out upon the broad expanse, "that I am at sea?"

Youth soon recuperates, soon forgets exhaustion, and readily puts aside all sense of fatigue.

So was it with our hero.

Throwing open the many blankets in which he had been wrapped, he found himself entirely nude.

He leaned upon an arm and looked out into the little room.

His eyes instantly noticed every article in it, but nowhere could he find his garments.

"I suppose they have taken them to some place to be dried," he soliloquized. "But how's this! It's daylight now. The long night passed swiftly, and I must have slept like a top. I do begin to believe that I may have taken a nap on the water, for I have no recollection of coming or being carried here."

At this moment the skipper stepped out of his state-room, and on observing that Tom was awake, cried:

"Ah, ha, lad! We've had a hard time with you all night. How came you to get into the water? Did you try to get away from some ship by foolishly jumping into the Bay of New York?"

"Why, no, sir. I only remember being pushed off a Fulton Street ferry-boat, while crossing to Brooklyn in the fog. I struggled to save myself, and I lost my senses."

"Fell from a Fulton Street ferry-boat, boy! Why, we picked you up off Red Hook, in the Bay! What time was it when you went over?" demanded the skipper.

"Nearly eight o'clock, sir," answered Tom.

"That's another wonder! Why, lad, you must have been at the least three hours in the water, and then be carried by a swift current to where we saw you! Were you ever at sea before?"

"No, sir."

"Do your people live in New York or Brooklyn?"

"My parents are dead, sir. I have an adopted mother and sister in Brooklyn."

"What's your name, my lad?"

"Burt—Thomas Burt."

"Burt! Thomas Burt," mused the skipper. "How strange! Are you of Virginia?"

"I was born there, sir. I came from near the headwaters of the James River."

"Yes, yes; I see now. How curiously things do come about!" exclaimed the master of the brigantine, then his face brightening as he continued; "and that was your father's name, wasn't it?"

"It was, sir."

"Ah, poor Tom!" soliloquized the skipper, as he thrust his hands in the pockets of his pea-jacket, and slightly inclined his body in the direction in which Tom was reclining; "your father was my very good friend when friends were scarce, and I, a struggling hard for advancement in my profession, and now, if possible, I will prove myself his son's friend. Well, my lad," he added, with a certain brusqueness in his manner that was far from displeasing, "I shall call you Tom, eh? My name's Tronsom—Captain Tronsom, of the *Isabella*, I'm known as—and, youngster, isn't it queer, now, how you felt as it were into my very hands? There was a Providence in it, I'm a-thinking. What a constitution you must have, to be sure! Any other lad—leastways any that I've ever come across, 'd 'a' perished if they'd undergone all you did between the time you fell overboard and I picked you up. But I'll take royal care of you, lad, and you can make the *Isabella* your home as long as you care to cruise in her."

The skipper paused to breath. He had never before made so long a speech. Presently he questioned:

"What did you say was the woman's name who adopted you? She must be a trump card, eh?"

Tom Burt smiled, and opened his laughing, hazel eyes as he answered:

"Oh, her name is St. John—Mrs. Ruth St. John."

"Well, there!" cried Captain Tronsom, moving rapidly from fore to aft of his little cabin; "I'll be weather-bound if there isn't another surprise. Why, youngster, I once knew the lady. Yes, she is rightly named, for a sweeter, kinder-hearted person I never knew. Nor was there a lovelier girl in all Virginia. I'm a Virginian myself, boy, and I do think our women right handsome."

The skipper was evidently warming up, and would doubtless have inflicted upon his involuntary guest reminiscences that might have resolved themselves into yarns, for the mariner was naturally garrulous, had he not been interrupted by the former saying:

"May I have my clothes, sir? I'm tired lying here; and how am I to get ashore? I hope my friends 'll not think I'm drowned."

"That's a miracle, I repeat, that you weren't," returned the skipper. "As to how I'm to get you ashore, I can't say just now. We're at least fifty knots from port. The only way we can fix it is to put you on some inward-bound vessel. But why can't you go to Antonia? We're on a trading voyage to ports in South and Central America. I'll take good care of you, and you may learn something of the world."

Without waiting for an answer, the skipper ran up the steps to the entrance to the cabin, and called, in the voice of a stentor, to the cook and steward, who was one and the same personage, to come to him.

A tall, good-natured, and good-featured negro—whose woolly head was tied a white apron, and fastened in the bosom of whose shirt were three ponderous brooches of the "purest metal," while from his ears hung enormous silver rings—put his woolly head out of the caboose and responded:

"Yes, sah; I'se dar in a moment. You see, I'se fixin' up sutfin' for the gemman to eat. I s'pects he's hungry now, cap'n."

"Well, when you come, doctor, bring with you the youngster's clothes. They're all right, eh? fit to put on, eh?"

"Yes, sah," replied the burly negro, "day am. I'll fotch 'em."

A few minutes later and Tom Burt found himself dressed in his now dry garments, seated at the captain's table, discussing, with the generous appetite of a youth, a grilled chicken, which the doctor had considerately prepared for him.

[To be continued.]

"Floating to Fortune" was commenced in No. 447.

DASHING DOLORES;

Or,

Chincapin Dick on the Border.

By JOSEPH E. BADGER, Jr.

CHAPTER XXXV.

STARTLING REVELATIONS.

IT would be difficult to say who was the most surprised by this bold coup of Antoine's, by means of which Red Tom and almost cast headlong into the midst of his enemies. The desperado himself was not the least astounded, though he was one of the first to recover.

It will be remembered that Antoine was ordered by his master, Don Estevan, to procure wine and food, upon which the adventurers were to break their fast, before Chincapin Dick met the old Spaniard, weapon in hand, to wipe out an imaginary insult.

The veteran servant set out to obey his orders, promptly enough, but just then he saw Red Tom, haggard and travel-stained, while his loved Swiftfoot looked weary and worn, showing unmistakable traces of an unusual hard campaign.

At any other time Antoine would, in all probability, have slunk away and only obeyed the summons of his red-haired enemy at the last moment, in hopes that some other servant, or Don Estevan himself, would open the gates to admit the desperado, who was so very free with his tongue, hand and foot.

But upon this occasion Antoine hastened to open the gates before Red Tom could reach them, with an alacrity that would have awakened the suspicions of the outlaw had he been anything like his usual self. But this he was not.

He reeled unsteadily, like a drunken man, as he dismounted. His eyes were terribly bloodshot, and the big veins stood out in bold relief upon his temples and neck. Fatigue, loss of rest, and the bitter disappointment which had followed so close upon the heels of his horrible revenge, added to the pain occasioned by his wounded face, in which he had caught a severe cold, all combined to deaden his naturally quick wit, and keep him from noting the suspicious alacrity with which old Antoine admitted him.

Hastily turning the horse over to a fellow-servant, Antoine followed Red Tom, who was entering the building with a weary listlessness hitherto foreign to his nature.

The old fellow had not forgotten the eagerness with which Huckleberry and Little Jack had questioned him concerning the blood-stained clothes once worn by poor Uncle Dick, nor the threats they made after hearing his story. That had given him his first hope of being revenged upon his brutal abuser, and the golden opportunity which he believed had now arrived was greedily seized upon.

This was why he opened the door, and flinging his whole strength into the effort, pushed the red-haired desperado headlong into the room, with the loud announcement of his name; why he followed, closing and barring the door—for the only fastening was on the inside.

He was determined that Red Tom should not escape before the Texans had full opportunity to execute their threats, and equally resolved to be a witness of his richly-deserved punishment, even at some little risk to his own carcass.

It was Red Tom himself who began hostilities.

As he recovered his balance after Antoine's forcible push, he recognized Chincapin Dick and his two comrades. Naturally enough, he believed they were a party to the bold action of the old servant, and that he had fallen into a cunning trap set for his especial benefit.

That thought aroused his usual self, and the knowledge of his past crimes forbade his thinking of or asking for quarter. They must win their triumph before they could wear it.

Quick as thought he drew a revolver, and discharged it point blank at Chincapin Dick, who staggered back, falling over the chair from which he had just arisen.

Satisfied that one dangerous enemy was effectually disposed of, Red Tom turned his weapon to cover another, but swift as were his motions, he was just a breath too late.

With a swift and sure leap, that a panther-might have envied, old Huckleberry crossed the intervening space, striking full against the desperado, and hurling him heavily to the floor, though just too late to arrest the shot that struck down the young rancher.

Even while in the air the veteran drew his heavy bowie-knife, and clinging to Red Tom as he fell, he buried the long blade twice in the outlaw's body before they were brought up by the wall, against which they rolled.

He strove to deal a third blow, but the shock knocked the blood-dripping weapon out of his hand, and before he could draw another strong hands grasped both him and Red Tom.

Huckleberry uttered a little yell of delight, and ceased his struggles as soon as he saw that it was Chincapin Dick who was holding him.

Little Jack was taking care of the wounded desperado, stripping belt and weapons together from his waist, but contenting himself with that precaution, for he saw that the veteran cowboy's blows had been as sure as they had been swift—that Red Tom's earthly race was well-nigh run.

Through this brief but exciting scene Don Estevan had stood as though paralyzed; but now, as a fresh and no less startling emergency arose, he sprang into life and motion.

With a loud cry of warning he leaped forward and pushed against Chincapin Dick so forcibly that the young rancher was only saved from an awkward fall by bringing up against the opposite wall.

Uttering an angry cry, our hero snatched a pistol from his belt, naturally enough believing the old Spaniard meant him evil by this sudden and unexpected assault. But the weapon was not used, nor even cocked, for the solution lay before his eyes.

A second body lay upon the floor, weltering in its own blood, and over which Don Estevan stood, the picture of agonized grief and woe.

This heap of lifeless clay was all that now remained of him we have known as Don Luis.

To fully understand this strange occurrence, we must go back for a few minutes.

Don Luis had been awake when Dashing Dolores was borne into the house, and his curiosity was aroused by the haste with which the old woman who had been acting as his nurse was summoned to the bedside of the new patient.

As Antoine had rightly informed the Texans, he had in a great measure regained his strength, though blind; and now, curious to learn the cause of this strange excitement in a place usually so still and dead-alive, the young man groped his way to the room where Dashing Dolores was being cared for by the old woman, who, standing in a wholesome awe of her rather imperious patient, quickly satisfied him, as far as she was able.

She knew Dashing Dolores by sight, and the mention of her name was enough to send Don Luis off in search of his father, to learn who had brought her there, and under what circumstances the wound had been received.

While he was groping his way the affray occurred which has been so forcibly described; and guided by the noise, Don Luis easily entered the room, just as Chincapin Dick was assuring Huckleberry that he was not seriously wounded.

The young Mexican instantly recognized the voice, and had not noticed as to the escort under which Dashing Dolores had left the hacienda. The inference he drew from this may readily be imagined, and, taken in connection with the lawlessness of his whole life, will sufficiently account for what follows, without making any further analyzation.

Drawing the long, slender knife which was his constant companion, by night as well as by day, Don Luis sprang forward to glut his cherished and carefully nursed revenge, guided by the sound of his rival's voice alone. And only for the prompt interference of Don Estevan, that revenge would assuredly have been slaked in the heart's blood of the young Texan, for no other person realized the danger until all was over.

Owing to the position of the different parties, Don Estevan felt, rather than reasoned, that the blow would be struck before he could reach and overpower Don Luis, and, as the only resource, he hurled Chincapin Dick violently aside.

But in saving one life he sacrificed another.

Unable to see, Don Luis stumbled over the Spaniard's foot and fell headlong to the floor. In striving to save himself, the blade of his knife was turned upward, and falling heavily upon the point, it was buried to the hilt in his heart, death being almost instantaneous.

For a few moments Don Estevan gave full vent to his grief, but when Chincapin Dick ventured to utter a few words of condolence, a complete and remarkable change came over him.

With a violent exertion of will his features regained their customary stately repose, all save for a vivid, almost maniacal glitter in his eyes. His voice was still calm as he turned and slowly addressed the astonished Texan.

"You can scarcely dispute my right to demand satisfaction at your hands now, señor, since I have sacrificed my own son in saving your life. Draw and defend!"

"Stop a bit," suddenly uttered Red Tom, raising himself upon one elbow and speaking with difficulty. "I wouldn't interfere to spoil sport if I thought there was the faintest chance of your killing that accursed dog, Don Estevan, but I know that the two others would be upon your back before you could strike a single blow."

"I will fight the three, then," was the stern reply. "I will avenge my son."

"Don Luis is not—never was your son," deliberately uttered the wounded desperado. "He was my brother, and, like me, son of the man who stole your children. I learned all the particulars from my father, Tomas, and planned to deceive you, in order to get my hand into your money-bags without running any great risks. This is the truth, I swear by the grave of my mother, that Luis was of no more akin to you than I am."

"I can testify to the truth of his words, señors!" uttered a pleasant, though somewhat panting voice, sounding through the closed door. "Open—let me in! I can tell you the whole story from beginning to end, Señor Don Estevan!"

Scarce knowing what he was about, bewildered Antoine removed the fastening, only to be knocked half way across the room as the door was flung forcibly open, and a large, extremely fat woman entered—none other than Paquita, our old friend.

"He says true, Don Estevan," she added, cautiously lowering her massive bulk into one of the chairs, as though doubting its stability. "I, the one-time wife of that abominable wretch and miserable husband, Tio Tomas, tell you so!"

"That is a lie!" cried Red Tom, energetically—so much so that Huckleberry crept closer to him, lest he should yet be capable of doing a mischief. "Our mother is dead long ago."

"A blessing to her, too!" snapped Dame Paquita. "And all honest people would have rejoiced if she had taken you and yours with her! Don't you be afraid of my ever claiming relationship with you. Tio Tomas was too much for me, and he was an angel beside you!"

"Tell me what you claim to know," interposed Don Estevan, vainly striving for his usual self-control. "Speak, woman! Do you not see that I am suffering untold agony?"

"Instead, you should rejoice at being well rid of a false son—and you will, when I tell you that your daughter is still living——"

Don Estevan staggered back to the table, and thus supported himself. For a moment it seemed as if he would faint, and Chincapin Dick moved toward him with the intention of lending him assistance, but the old Spaniard motioned him back.

"Go on—I am better. Tell me all, and quickly!"

Paquita was willing enough to reveal what she knew, but by no means so ready to make the story short. It was not every day that she had so good an opportunity of proving her importance, and upon this occasion she seemed inclined to make the most of it.

As much of what she said has already been placed before the reader, a repetition here would be an unnecessary waste of valuable space.

She related how she had married Tio Tomas, how she had learned his secret during one of his drunken spells, and how she had left him through fear of her life, taking the little girl which he had stolen with her, together with the clothes and ornaments both of the children had on when they were abducted.

In proof of her words she produced the ornaments, and handed them to Don Estevan for identification. Despite the tears which filled his old eyes he recognized the trinkets at once.

"My child!—where is she?—tell me!" he brokenly uttered, unable to say more.

"Under your own roof, Don Estevan," interposed Chincapin Dick. "She knows the relationship existing between you, but bound me to secrecy until she should give me permission to speak. But since you have heard so much, you should know the whole truth. The one we have known as Dashing Dolores is your daughter!"

"It is true," said Paquita, in answer to the Don's inquiring glance. "She is indeed your daughter, though how she came here is more than I can guess."

Don Estevan waited to hear no more, but rushed from the room like one suddenly gone crazy, eager to clasp his long-lost child in his arms.

To make all things clear, a word of explanation concerning this visit of Donna Paquita may not come amiss at this juncture.

As heretofore stated, she was by no means anxious to restore Dashing Dolores to the arms of her father, for fear of thus robbing herself. It has also been noted under what circumstances she made known the truth to Dashing Dolores.

Although Dashing Dolores had been acquainted with Red Tom's brother for nearly a year, she was in ignorance of his being installed as her father's son until the night when Red Tom surprised them together in the arbor, or the night before that upon which Chincapin Dick was captured at the fandango in Santa Rosa.

The darkness had concealed her great astonishment at this, as she believed, discovery of a long-lost brother, and Red Tom came upon them before she had quite decided what course to pursue.

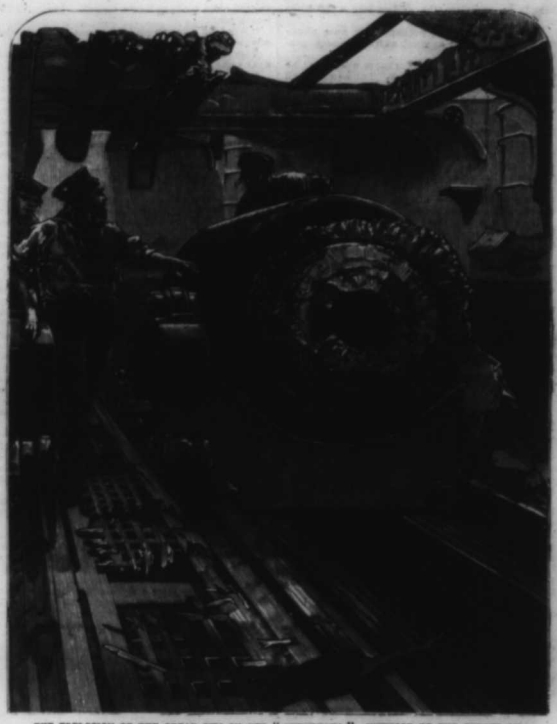
The startling communication he made for the time banished all else from her mind, and it was not until several days after Chincapin Dick's capture that she told Paquita about the false Don Luis.

The mention of the scar which had obliterated the curious birthmark aroused her suspicions, for she knew that Tio Tomas had a son of about the same age as the rightful heir, whose arm had been scarred in a precisely similar manner. This, with the fact of his being brought forward by Red Tom, whom she recognized during his brief connection with the Border Vultures, aroused her suspicions that all was not right, and she resolved to investigate the matter in person, though keeping her doubts from Dashing Dolores.

Her opportunity came on the morning of the day which witnessed the escape of Chincapin Dick, and on pretense of visiting an old friend, Paquita set out on the, to her, long and tedious journey, reaching Santa Rosa, where she spent the night. What followed her crossing the ford and reaching the house—the gates of which had been left open by old Antoine in his eagerness to entrap the red-haired desperado—the reader knows.

Now that there was a lull, Chincapin Dick began to feel the smarting of the wound he had received at the hand of Red Tom, which was bleeding freely.

Owing to the pressure of events, which were obliged to be recorded as rapidly as possible, the



THE EXPLOSION OF THE GREAT GUN ON THE "THUNDERER."—INTERIOR OF THE TURRET OF THE "THUNDERER" AFTER THE EXPLOSION.

nature of his hurt and manner of escape were barely alluded to at the time.

The desperado had meant death should follow his sudden assault, and it was not his fault that the young ranchero escaped; but as the pistol was pointed at him, our hero sprang up and aside, stumbling over his chair, though not entirely escaping injury.

Instead of piercing his heart, as Red Tom intended, the ball simply plowed its way through the inner part of Dick's arm, a few inches below the shoulder, inflicting a trifling flesh-wound.

During the intensely exciting events which followed so rapidly, he had wholly forgotten the fact of his being wounded; but now, as a lull came, the tingling pain in his arm called his attention to it, and he started to stop the flow of blood by binding his neckerchief around the wound, when Huckleberry interposed, his anxious tears aroused.

"Let me cut open the sleeve an' see jest what it is," he insisted, suiting the action to the words. "A littler hurt then that hes more'n once lost a man his arm—"

"This is work for a woman—your fingers are too clumsy, señor," interposed Donna Paquita, arising and coming forward. "Ah, the poor arm! Holy Mother!"

She uttered a scream that might easily have been heard half a mile, throwing up her hands and staggering back, her little eyes almost protruding from the sockets as she stared at the portion of Dick's arm laid bare by Huckleberry's knife.

Upon the white flesh was a curious blemish—a black mole shaped like a ring, the skin in the centre being even whiter than that surrounding the birthmark.

"*You are his son—brother to Dashing Dolores!*" gasped Paquita, in amazement.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

"RING DOWN THE CURTAIN!"

WORDS cannot describe the astonishment with which this truly startling announcement was received. It fell like a thunderbolt in the midst of the little party, stunning them, one and all.

Chincapin Dick stared helplessly at his two chums, who, if anything, appeared to be more completely taken aback than even he was himself, though old Huckleberry managed to mutter:

"A Greaser!—my Dick! *It's* a durned, owdacious lie!"

But there was one in the party besides Dame Paquita who knew that it was no lie, but the plain, sober truth—and that one was no other than Red Tom, the wounded desperado.

Painfully raising himself upon one hand, he stared at the white arm left bare by the old cowboy's knife. The small but distinct birthmark could have been seen at double the distance by eyes that were sharpened neither by love nor hate, and to the wounded wretch the mark stood out with almost painful distinctness.

There could be no mistake. Tio Tomas had described it too often and clearly for that.

And as he sank back with a hollow groan of mingled pain and rage, Red Tom knew that his hand had helped his enemy—the one whom he hated most of any upon earth—to find a father, a sister, an honorable name, well backed up with gold and lands.

Only for that unlucky wound the discovery might never have been made!

Paquita's scream quickly brought Don Estevan back to the scene, fearing he scarcely knew what fresh complications.

Dashing Dolores, having quickly recovered from her swoon, bore him company, and the surprise which awaited her was even more overwhelming than the one received by Don Estevan.

The man whom she had loved with such an ardent, overpowering passion—whom she had dared so much to win—for whose sake she had dyed her hands deeply in human blood—now stood revealed as her twin brother!

As for Don Estevan, he took the disclosure far more composedly than would have been possible under other circumstances, and this for several reasons.

He had already passed through a scene of intense excitement, which left him and his passions not a little weakened. Then came the transports with which he had recognized his daughter in Dashing Dolores. And when it is remembered that his eyes had so recently been violently opened to the cruel deception practiced upon him by Red Tom and his brother, the fact of his receiving the enthusiastic announcement of Dame Paquita with a certain doubt and suspicion need not to be marveled at.

Dashing Dolores was one of the first to recover from the general surprise and bewilderment, and with a stout resolve to make the best of what could not be helped, she approached Chincapin Dick with a faint smile, speaking in a clear, distinct voice:

"*My brother*, I congratulate you sincerely!"

Dick clasped the extended hand, and acting upon the impulse of the moment, drew her close to his side, pressing his lips to her white, cold brow.

The maiden turned paler than ever, and Chincapin Dick felt a quick shudder agitate her frame, but then she clung closer to him, and he knew that the secret victory was won—that she had accepted the situation, and henceforward her love for him would be only that of a sister for a brother.

Red Tom had watched this scene with a sneer upon his lips, but with a furious rage and hatred tearing at his heart.

He had lived to see all, save one, of his cherished schemes completely foiled—to see his brother killed, and his most hated enemy about to step into the niche he had occupied for so brief a time, while he himself was slowly dying the death of a dog, unpitied, uncared-for—an outcast in death as he had been in life.

Yet there appeared to be one soft spot in his heart, after all; for, when Dashing Dolores and Paquita were tenderly caring for Chincapin Dick's wounded arm, he faintly called to Don Estevan, who mechanically drew nearer to where he lay.

"I won't keep you long, señor," he said, with a faint smile. "That fellow struck with a sure and strong hand. His knife went home, and in ten minutes I will be a dead man. No," he added, hastily, as the old Spaniard made as though he would examine the wounds, "I didn't mean that. I am past doctoring. I can feel the blood dropping—dropping inside. You would only hasten my death with your mistaken kindness, and there is something I wish to tell you before I die.

"My throat is dry and parched. Will you send Antoine for some drink? Let it be of the strongest, for I do not wish to die until I have confessed all. It is the last favor I shall ask of you—thanks, señor—a thousand thanks!"

Don Estevan nodded to Antoine, who left the room and promptly returned, bearing glasses and a bottle of strong brandy.

As soon as the cork was extracted Red Tom grasped the bottle, and disdaining the glass, greedily swallowed a long draught of the fiery liquor from the original receptacle. Then, still retaining the bottle and drinking at short intervals, he resumed:

"From first to last, señor, you have treated me like a gentleman, no matter how ruffianly I may have acted, and I can never forget that, while life lasts. Had you acted different, I would have died in silence, leaving you in doubt whether you were not again deceived—whether you were not cherishing a second impostor instead of your rightful son; as if he was still living," with a slight nod toward the dead body of his brother. "But he is dead, and I am dying. I have lost all that I staked my soul against, and though I hate *him* as the devil does holy water, I will prove my gratitude to you."

It is not necessary to follow the dying outlaw's words one by one, when the substance can be expressed so much more briefly.

He fully confirmed Paquita's account of the manner in which she became possessed of the garments and trinkets, together with the girl-twin, for Tio Tomas had concealed nothing from him in the consultation they had before his death.

Nearly two years after the disappearance of Paquita with little Dolores, Tio Tomas lost Chincapin Dick in San Antonio, thanks to his brutal treatment of the lad. A rough-looking but tender-hearted fellow, named Amos Cook, took the lad from the drunken brute, and Tio Tomas was never after able to recover his prize.

It may be stated here that Amos Cook raised the lad as his own son, calling him Dick, and caring for him until he died, when our hero was about twelve years old.

Believing that both children were dead, or at least where they would never turn up to trouble his new-formed plans, Red Tom sought out his brother, and carefully tutoring him in the part he was to play, effected the imposition, as already recorded.

"It is for your sake, not his, that I tell you all this," concluded Red Tom, as he drained the bottle and cast it aside. "And yet—I am dying. I do not see why I should cherish such feelings of revenge. He has fought me fairly, and fate was on his side. If I thought—if he would not think me a craven, frightened by the near approach of death—I could almost wish to clasp his hand and ask his forgiveness."

Faint though the outlaw's voice was, the stillness in the room was such that every word was distinctly audible, and the moment the wish was expressed,

THE EXPLOSION OF THE GREAT GUN ON THE "THUNDERER."—EXPLOSION OF THE 38-TON GUN ON THE "THUNDERER," JUST BEHIND.

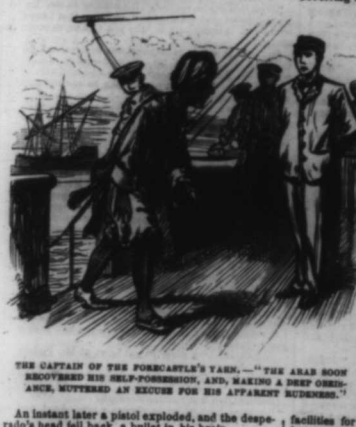
PROVIDENT AND MUSCULAR SQUIRRELS.—A PAIR OF MUSCULAR SQUIRRELS, IN MAINE WHO CARRY OFF WHOLE EARS OF CORN.—SEE PAGE 86.

Chincapin Dick started forward and stooped over his fallen enemy with outstretched hand.

With a strength not to be expected in a dying man, Red Tom grasped the proffered hand, and suddenly jerked the young rancher toward him, at the same moment drawing a slender knife from his breast and endeavoring to plunge it into Dick's side.

This treacherous attempt was so sudden, and unexpected by our hero, that in all probability it would have succeeded only for the prompt interference of Dashing Dolores, whose suspicions were awakened by the peculiar glitter in the outlaw's blood-shot eyes.

Unable to prevent the stroke otherwise in time, she kicked Red Tom's wrist, knocking the gleaming weapon out of his hand.



THE CAPTAIN OF THE FORECASTLE'S YARN.—"THE ARAB SOON RECOVERED HIS SELF-POSSESSION, AND, MAKING A DEEP OBEISANCE, MUTTERED AN EXCUSE FOR HIS APPARENT RUDENESS."

An instant later a pistol exploded, and the desperado's head fell back, a bullet in his brain.

Little Jack recocked his weapon, but the precaution was unnecessary.

Red Tom had gone to his last account, to answer for his manifold crimes!

* * * * *

But little more need be added that cannot be supplied by the reader's imagination.

Thoroughly convinced that Chincapin Dick was, indeed, his son, Don Estevan gave him a greeting amply warm enough to satisfy all parties, and when the three friends left the hacienda on the day following, it was with the understanding that Don Estevan and Dashing Dolores were to follow them, as soon as the wound of the latter would permit.

That same evening old Antoine brought in startling tidings.

In the fight with the soldiers, which followed the escape of our friends, Black Panther was killed, and his band of Border Vultures almost totally annihilated. His hairy head was placed upon exhibition in Santa Rosa for several weeks.

The shock was too much for Paquita, who pined away until she attained quite reasonable dimensions, then married an honest innkeeper, whom she may be making happy to this day, for aught we know to the contrary.

Old Huckleberry won the wager he made, while lying in covert, waiting for the proper time for them to venture into Santa Rosa, for there were a wedding and a christening inside of the year, in which Chincapin Dick and Ina Stevens were the parties more particularly concerned.

If space permitted, the festivities which accompanied that wedding would well repay a particular account, but this must be left to the fancy of the reader. Enough that all parties thoroughly enjoyed themselves, and Huckleberry went to bed under the table, "drunker 'n a b'iled owl," to use his own expression.

THE CAPTAIN OF THE FORECASTLE'S YARN.—"LIEUTENANT CARRUTHERS SHOUTED OUT, 'ALL HANDS MAKE SAIL!' AND, SPRINGING FORWARD, CUT THE CABLE BY WHICH WE WERE ANCHORED."

A long wedding-trip was taken, for Ina's sake; life on the ranche being almost impossible to her, so soon after that direful tragedy, and it was deemed best to remove her from the spot every detail of which so forcibly reminded her of her sad bereavement.

They—for Dashing Dolores, Huckleberry and Little Jack formed part of the bridal party—paid a long visit to Ned and Charlie Blaze, when the stirring incidents of their "Boy Border" life was recalled, and all had a good time generally.

Before that trip was ended, Dashing Dolores became quite satisfied with a brother's love from Chincapin Dick, and when she returned home she used to write and receive long letters that made her eyes sparkle and her cheeks flush brilliantly. Then there was another wedding—but we must stop, for it was reported, and with truth, that the entire coast-line was begirt with shoals and reefs and other maritime dangers.

It was a matter of notoriety that these Jowasamee pirates attacked all vessels trading in the Gulf, and so complete had been their system of robbery that English shipping always sought the convoy of a company's cruiser or man-of-war of some nationality. Not only did they carry this practice of pillaging to a system, but they were also guilty of the greatest cruelties to their captives. It was the invariable custom of the Jowasamees to put to death all prisoners. But if these had offered a gallant, though unavailing resistance, and had thereby entailed a loss upon them, then the victors slaughtered the hapless wretches with the most refined tortures. Notwithstanding this, the commanding officers of the cruisers of the Indian navy serving on the Persian Gulf station had one and all received explicit orders from the Bombay government not to molest the pirates in the prosecution of their mild pursuits of pillaging traders and murdering their crews, and all naval officers were instructed only to fire upon them in the event of their first opening fire upon their commands. Of such an act of temerity the Jowasamee pirates had hitherto been guiltless; audacious as they had become in attacking merchant ships manned with European crews, owing to the amazing impunity they enjoyed, still as yet they had not dared to attack ships of war of the great trading company that was so soon to overshadow with its might the Eastern world, and it was never for a moment thought that they would ever attempt such a rash act. To resume my narrative:

On this pleasant morning, the captain, as I have said, had gone ashore about five o'clock to partake of the agent's hospitality, and to confer regarding some treasure he had on board. Two hours after his departure the commander of one of the large piratical dhows came alongside in his dingey, and expressed a wish to communicate with the commanding officer of the *Viper*. Lieutenant Carruthers at once asked the pirate chief to come on deck. I was on duty at the gangway, acting for the quartermaster, and well remember the form and visage of the dusky freebooter as he stepped up the low sides of the cruiser, disdaining the use of the "man ropes" that hang over the sides to assist visitors.

Directly this man reached the deck, and before he even had the courtesy to salute the representative of a power mightier far than that to which he owed allegiance, he cast quick, searching glances around the ship. The young lieutenant waited in dignified silence until the Arab chieftain—so different from the generality of his race, who, whatever may be their characteristics, bear ever about them the impress of nature's nobility—had remembered what was due to his rank, and had saluted the quarter-deck of the ship. The Arab soon recovered his self-possession, and seemed annoyed with himself, for, making a deep obeisance, he muttered an excuse for his apparent rudeness, while his dark-brown cheek flushed up with conscious shame.

There was something in all this that looked sinister, and though of tender years, I felt a certain fear take possession of me, accompanied with a sense of insecurity. The man was not to be trusted, I thought. His countenance was certainly not reassuring, while his personal appearance was that of a man fully capable, as far as great muscular development went, of carrying out any scheme suggested by a bold and reckless spirit.

The Jowasamee leader, producing a paper, stated that he had received an order from the British agent in Bushire to be supplied with a certain amount of powder and round shot from the magazine of the *Viper*, should the Jowasamee vessels lying at anchor, of which he was commander, were about to proceed on a cruise, and having run out of their ammunition, he had applied for and received the necessary permission, and had, indeed, paid beforehand for the articles required.

So saying, the Arab produced the order for the delivery of the ammunition, and the receipt for the money paid over; both were in regular form, and were signed by the East India Company's agent. Our acting commander had no choice but to supply the necessaries. It had always been the custom for the commanding officers of ships-of-war to honor the drafts of the political Residents of the Persian Gulf and elsewhere, and he knew his superior had on a previous occasion similarly obliged his friend. So Lieutenant Carruthers at once consented to make over the ammunition required. The magazine and shot-locker were accordingly opened, and the six-pounder cartridges, with an equal number of shot, passed into the native boat. I forget how many rounds were supplied, but the Arab commodore, having come in a large dingey, was able to carry away the entire supply. He then saluted the English officer with a studied politeness, and thanking him, descended into his boat.

Half an hour passed by, and soon our men were piped to breakfast. It so happened this day (it was Saturday) was set apart for the weekly cleansing of the lower deck; it was called "lower-deck day" among us for'ard. The little *Viper*, like most craft of her tonnage, carried only one deck below, and this was of the nature denominated "flying lower-deck"—that is, it was composed entirely of hatches which rested on cross-pieces, or carlines, and beneath it were stowed all the gear and purser's stores. When the lower-deck was about to be cleaned the first order given was, "Up all lower-deck hatches;" and they were carried up above to be scrubbed; of course, all the arms and mess-gear were also passed up, and the men that day always had their meals on deck in anything but comfort, though somehow the *Viper*'s boys never cared about the discomfort. I suppose we were accustomed to it; though, in truth, I think sailors nowadays are not such a hardy race of men as they used to be when I was a boy.

It is the fashion now to pet and spoil your sailor as well as your soldier. I enter into these particulars for an object, as it turned out that if it had not been "lower-deck day" matters might have gone rather differently with the bonny little *Viper*.

The lower-deck hatches had been passed up, the sails had been loosed to dry—which was another peculiar feature of this day—and the sailors had all gone to breakfast to refresh the inner man before the day's work of scrubbing and "holystoning" everything that could be made to look cleaner and more shipshape by the process.

The men squatted about the deck in messes, each mess with its bright array of tin pots and pannikins, and buckets with brass hoops containing the tea.

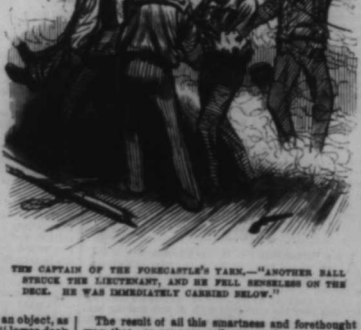
Jack was enjoying himself according to his wont, cracking together his jokes and his hard, weevily biscuit, and washing down the mixture with copious draughts of the liquid that cheers but not inebriates, though from the bottom of his heart he entertained a wish, to which he frequently gave utterance, that the weak tea could be transposed into potent "Jamaiky," when he would both cheer and be inebriate.

Suddenly a cry was raised:

"The dhows are under way, and standing toward us," and the quartermaster, who gave utterance to it, sprang down below to the officers, who were breakfasting together in the wardroom.

There was an uprising of every man from the deck, about which the messes were scattered; messkit was thrown on one side, and we all rushed to the side to see what was in the wind. There, sure enough, were bearing down upon us the whole squadron of dhows.

No doubt could be entertained of their intention, for not only were they steering for us, but their decks were crowded with the piratical crews, who, all armed to the teeth for boarding, were even now filling the air with shouts and yells of triumph. In an instant our officers came tumbling up from below. Lieutenant Carruthers shouted out, "All hands make sail!" and, himself springing forward, cut the cable by which we were anchored. With the presence of mind of a brave man and the instinct of a true seaman, he knew that the primary consideration was to get the ship under sail, for then he could bring his superior seamanship and the smartness of his men as elements into the contest. Providentially, the sails were at the time loosed to a "bowline," so that they could be expeditiously sheeted home and hoisted up. With the perfect discipline of old men-o'-war's men we all repaired to our stations for making sail, and in less than one minute from the time of the order being given by our commanding officers the foretopsail was brought up the topmast, while the topgallant-sheets were nimbly hauled through the sheaves as the yard went up, so that no unnecessary delay might ensue in setting the topgallant sail. The forecastle men were at the same time hoisting away the jibs and the foretopmast-staysail, and other hands had hauled down the forestaff and sheet, so that directly the lieutenant commanding cut the cable with a tomahawk the brigantine fell off the wind and began to gather way. The quartermaster had seized the tiller—the *Viper* had no wheel—and kept the ship before the wind until some time after sail had been made. All this time the gunner and his mate had opened the magazine, and were passing up the cartridges, while the former warrant-officer, pressing into the service the ship's cook and a couple of native officers' servants, made them hand up the round shot preparatory to opening fire.



THE CAPTAIN OF THE FORECASTLE'S YARN.—"ANOTHER BALL STRUCK THE LIEUTENANT, AND HE FELL SENSELESS ON THE DECK. HE WAS IMMEDIATELY CARRIED BELOW."

The result of all this smartness and forethought was that, as soon as sail was made on the little *Viper*, she was in a position to open fire on the enemy.

The maintop-men had not been idle, but had got the great fore-and-aft mainsail ready for hoisting, so that scarcely were the sails forward set than all hands clapped on to "throat" and "peak" halliards, and at the word from the gallant Carruthers, "Stump and go, boys!" the jaws of the gaff swiftly moved up to the mainmast, the huge white field of canvas flopping lazily to and fro in the morning air.

We were safe; but, oh! how nearly we had trod the gloomy confines that separate life from death were shown to us with fearful distinctness by the light of the flashes of the pirates' guns, as they

THE EXPLOSION OF THE GREAT GUN ON THE "THUNDERER."

ALTHOUGH the United States was the first country that used heavy rifled cannons in revolving turrets, England has taken up the American idea and far outstripped us in carrying it out. The English arsenals and navy yards are never silent like ours are, but there is the continual bustle of preparation and experiments. Great guns are made to pierce any known thickness and hardness of armor plating; then armor plating is so fashioned as to resist any gun; then greater guns are made, and so the struggle goes. Hundreds of thousands of dollars are spent every year in experiments, which are, sometimes, it is said to relate, attended with loss of life. The *Captain*, a British ironclad, was so heavily plated with iron that she sank with all on board, and only a short time ago a thirty-eight-ton gun, in the fore-turret of the *Thunderer*, burst, killing ten men and injuring about thirty more. Let us explain to our readers what the armament of the *Thunderer* is. Four heavy guns constitute it. In the after-turret are two thirty-five-ton guns of the pattern first known as the "Woolwich Infant." In the fore-turret the arrangements are of a special nature. The two guns weighed thirty-eight tons each, and they were worked and loaded by means of hydraulic gear. The simple and powerful mechanism thus employed excited much admiration, and saved a large amount of manual toil, and at the same time provided peculiar facilities for the working of long and heavy guns in turrets of moderate size.

But despite all that science has achieved in respect to the construction and working of artillery, the fearful disaster occurred.

The gun burst just in front of the trunnions, and the fore-part was buried into the sea. The *Thunderer* was at the British Winter headquarters in the Sea of Marmora at the time. It is not yet known what caused the explosion. The English naval authorities are disputing over it, and each one advancing his own theory, but as yet nothing is settled.

The *Thunderer* seems to have been peculiarly unfortunate. This is the fourth accident that has occurred on board of her.

Not very long ago one of her boilers burst, causing the death of forty-five men.

Although a gun which weighs thirty-eight tons is an immense monster as compared with those of only a few years ago, it is small when placed by the side of others now made in England. The ironclad *Inflexible* will have guns weighing eighty tons placed in her turret, and experiments have been made at Spezzia with one weighing 101½ tons. It was made in 1876, in England, for the Italian navy, and it is 22 feet 10½ inches long. The projectile for this monster weighs 1705 pounds, and 375 pounds of powder were used at each shot.

The immense weight of such a gun is hard to appreciate until a comparison is made. If it were placed on the one side of a scale, it would take over three thousand two hundred boys, weighing 75 pounds each, to balance it.

Such immense guns as these require to be worked by hydraulic machinery, as they are so heavy that men cannot do it. The noise of the discharge, too, is so great as to be literally deafening—that is, the gunners who are employed in firing eventually become deaf.

It is an exceedingly rare thing that a gun bursts, but when it does, it is terrible in its destruction both of property and life.

THE CAPTAIN OF THE FORECASTLE'S YARN.

THREE-AND-FIFTY years ago, sir, I was an "ordinary seaman" on board the *Viper*, one of the cruisers of the Honorable East India Company. She was a ten-gun brig-of-war, having a complement of sixty-five officers and men. At the time of which I am about to speak we were lying at anchor in Bushire Roads, and our captain had gone ashore to breakfast with the government agent, leaving his executive officer, Lieutenant Carruthers, in command.

There were several native craft lying in the roadstead, and among others were four large "dhows" belonging to the pirates who lived on that portion of the Arabian shore of the Persian Gulf that extends from Ras Mussendom to beyond Ras el Khaimah, a part of the littoral that was always called "The Pirate Coast," and which was totally unexplored by Europeans.

The Indian navy had not then undertaken the elaborate surveys which subsequently robbed the "Pirate Coast" of half of its terrors,

opened fire upon us with all the cannon at their command. One minute's more delay or indecision and we had been massacred to a man by an enemy who never gave or expected quarter.

"To your guns, men!" now cried our youthful captain; and quickly the half-dozen carronades of the cruiser were cast loose, run in, loaded, and run out.

The "sail-trimmers," who were laid off to attend to their duties, braced up the headyards, and then Mr. Carruthers, as expert a seaman in "knocking a ship about" as ever I was shipmate with, commenced the game of battle. His skill in manœuvring was quickly apparent.

As soon as he had got his ship well in hand, he brought her up to the wind on the port tack, and, prepared at every point, fired his first gun at his assailants.

The shot of the latter raised down upon us with fearful rapidity, and committed great havoc among our crowded quarters. Four to one in ships and guns, with twice that odds in men, made it terrible uphill work to escape.

It, however, soon became evident that our captain had no intention of seeking safety in flight, but proposed to himself to fight it out. This was an act approaching almost to temerity, when it is considered that at any moment a shot might have disabled our rigging, and then, should they board, their numerical superiority would almost certainly have resulted in our destruction.

Just then a round-shot killed the gunner's mate, and Nos. 3 and 5 of my gun, scattering about the splinters, one of which wounded another man and myself, though so slightly that we stuck to our quarters. It was admirable to see the coolness with which Lieutenant Carruthers worked the ship, and dodged the shows every now and then, bringing the *Viper* ahead or close under the stern of some one of our four assailants, so that our fellows could give the enemy a raking fire that wrought great carnage in their crowded decks.

Just then a musket-ball wounded the brave young officer severely in the loins; but he, without a word, or even an exclamation of pain, merely bound a handkerchief round his waist, and refused to leave the deck, though the wound must have caused him intense pain.

He continued giving his orders, and had the gratification of seeing a round-shot carry away the mainmast of one of the enemy's shows. As he limped forward to express his approval to the captain of the gun who had fired the lucky shot that disposed of one of the quartet, another ball struck him on the forehead, and he fell senseless on the deck.

He was immediately carried below and the command devolved on Mr. Salter, the senior midshipman, a young officer worthy of succeeding the noble Carruthers, who had trained him as seaman and officer for such an emergency. Boy as he was, the midshipman carried on the action and manœuvred the ship as ably as his predecessor, while the death of their gallant chief fired every man to increased exertion.

Over and over again during this trying period one or other of the shows approached near enough to induce the crews to make preparations together in preparation for boarding, but each time they were foiled by superior seamanship, and received instead a broadside of grape poured in at close quarters, with a volley from the small arms. All this time the little *Viper* was turning and twisting like her namesake—now "going free," or sailing close-hauled with the canvas shivering as she was brought up almost into the wind's eye; then again she was "tacking" or "wearing ship," and running under the counter of one of her full-popped shows, and letting her have three rounds of canister within half pistol-shot. The end of it all was that the shows began to think that they had had enough of it, and, taking their crippled friend in tow, made out to sea.

It was our turn now, and we gave chase, following them some distance, though, truth to say, it was only to impress them with the idea of our still being prepared to carry on the action, which was not the case, for we had been terribly mauled. We soon returned to the anchorage, and then counted up our casualties; two of our six guns had been disabled, and of our crew of sixty-five officers and men, thirty-two (nearly half) had been killed and wounded.

Poor Lieutenant Carruthers, to whose gallantry and coolness all hands felt they owed their safety, expired a few minutes after receiving his last wound. The captain, who came off as soon as he could, proceeded to see with the especial object of interring every seaman in the sailor's boundless burying-ground—the mighty ocean; there the bodies of the gallant Carruthers and of the men who had so well seconded his efforts were laid in their everlasting rest. In justice to this officer (the captain, I mean), I ought to say that he bitterly regretted that his absence precluded his sharing in the dangers and glories of that eventful day, and that he shed tears over the scene that met his eye as he picked his way over the bodies of the dead and dying, interspersed with the *débris* and wreck of shattered gun-carriages, and spars, and decks and bulwarks, ripped up with the enemy's shot. And now

> "The mariner, whose eye is bright,
> Whose beard with age is hoar,
> Is gone."

And I, too, must take leave of my friend the reader, who, I hope, has listened "like a three years' child" to the narrative of the ancient mariner.

PROVIDENT AND MUSCULAR SQUIRRELS.

As a Portsmouth (N. H.) gentleman was passing an old house in the upper part of Kittery, Me., near the York Line, some days since, he was surprised to see a large squirrel come out through a hole in the roof with an ear of corn in his mouth, running over the ridgepole with it, and making his way to the ground by means of a shed-roof at the rear. In a few moments the bushy-tailed plunderer was followed by another, who also carried off with apparent ease a half-sized ear of corn. The squirrels were of the gray kind, and, probably, males; and they may be yet transferring ears of corn from the loft to their store in some hollow tree, for the gentleman who had witnessed their performance thought that if the occupants of the house (for it is occupied by well-to-do farmers) were too shiftless to patch up the roof of their dwelling, it was not his place to mount guard over the holes in it to keep squirrels out.

FLATTERY is more prejudicial than rudeness or anger.

THREE MERRY BOYS:

Their Adventures at School.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE MISSING PIE—A FEATHERY MYSTERY—TONY FREE AGAIN—A TRIAL BY JUDGE AND JURY—A LARK IN THE DARK.

"I AM told, Mr. Makemsmart said, when he came into the schoolroom, "that a meat-pie was eaten last night. In point of fact, it would seem that the pantry was forcibly opened, and several things disturbed. Who knows anything about this?"

Of course nobody did, and an expression of wonderment was on every face.

"It could not be Limpback," Mr. Makemsmart continued, "as Mr. Writher reports to me that he found him as he left him last night."

"That is a fact," the usher said; "and I think a change for the better has come over him."

"I hope so, with all my heart," Mr. Makemsmart said, sighing. "What was he doing?"

"Studying his lessons, sir."

"Now, boys," the schoolmaster said, bringing his cane down with a crash on his desk, "I ask you again about this—this—well, I can call it nothing but a robbery. I am determined to know, and it will be better for the guilty party, or parties, to confess at once."

All declared their innocence, and as the real culprit had kept his own counsel, the affair was indeed a mystery.

"Very well," said Mr. Makemsmart, blandly; "there will be bread and cheese for dinner today, and nothing to-morrow, unless I know the truth."

Somebody called out "Shame!" and Mr. Makemsmart darted into the middle of the room, but he returned to his desk without the satisfaction of having delivered a single cut, as he could not find the delinquent.

The usual routine was resumed after a few minutes, but presently Mr. Makemsmart, who happened to glance at the window, cried out to Mr. Writher:

"Where do these feathers come from?"

"Feathers?" the usher said. "I don't see any."

"Look at them falling like a snow-storm," Mr. Makemsmart roared; "they must come from one of the upper windows."

The schoolmaster and usher approached the window, and stood for some time watching the strange phenomenon.

"I have it!" Mr. Makemsmart almost shrieked, at last; "they come from the lumber-room. Quick, Mr. Writher, and see what Limpback is up to."

The usher presently returned, dragging Tony after him.

"I caught him in the act," Mr. Writher cried. He had opened one end of his pillow and was shaking the feathers out when I entered the room."

Mr. Makemsmart took Tony out of Mr. Writher's hands, and shook the boy till his teeth rattled in his head.

"Is the name of all that is evil," Mr. Makemsmart cried, "what possessed you to do such a trick?"

"I will tell you if you let me speak," Tony gasped. "You are shaking the life out of me. Oh, stop, or my head will fly off my shoulders!"

"If it did, you would be less to society," Mr. Makemsmart growled, but nevertheless desisting. "You imp of mischief, tell me what you mean by it."

"I wanted to attract somebody's attention," Tony said. "I shall go mad if I am locked up any longer in that horrible place."

"Mad!" Mr. Makemsmart echoed. "You will drive me mad with your impish pranks. Take that! and that! and that!"

As he spoke, he gave poor Tony three swinging boxes on the ears, and then kindly allowed him to roll over on the floor.

"What am I to do with him?" the schoolmaster cried, clutching his hair. "Can nobody advise me?"

"I should advise you to leave him alone," cried somebody from the middle of the room. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself."

Mr. Makemsmart, seizing his cane, fell upon an extremely small boy who had done nothing but suck his fingers, and smote him hip and thigh.

The boy yelled out a declaration of innocence; but he might as well have bellowed to the wind to relent, in course, for Mr. Makemsmart's blood was up, and it mattered not to him whom he thrashed, so long as he made somebody suffer.

"There," he said, pitching the cane to the other end of the room, "now, perhaps, another boy will mind me in my own house."

"Rah!" said the same exasperating voice.

"I know who it is," a little toady, named Snaller, cried out.

"Who is it?"

"Harry Walpole, sir."

"Stand out, Walpole," Mr. Makemsmart thundered. "Now, sir, what have you to say for yourself?"

"Nothing, sir," Walpole replied, calmly. "It is true that I did call out; but I do not think without reason."

"Not without reason! Explain yourself," Mr. Makemsmart cried, holding his breath till he was nearly black in the face. "Am I to understand that you have taken it upon yourself to dictate to me?"

"You are to understand nothing of the kind, sir," Harry Walpole replied; "but it struck me that you were letting your temper get the better of your discretion, and I thought you might do something that you would be afterward sorry for. I stand here, sir, to take the consequences of what I have done."

"Go to your seat," Mr. Makemsmart said, in a husky tone to the schoolboy.

"I quite agree with you, sir," Harry said, bowing as he walked slowly away.

Very little was said during the rest of the day, but the boys knew full well that a storm was brewing, and they all felt quite relieved when the bell rang for them to retire for the night.

"I think that we shall not be doing justice to ourselves if we don't serve that sneak, Snaller, out for poaching on you, Harry," Bertie Baldwin said.

"Hear, hear," Willie Howard cried. "I was thinking the same thing. What is the best to be done?"

"Leave the little wretch to his conscience," Walpole said, as he jumped into bed. "It will all come home to him one of these days, never fear, dear boys."

"No, no," Mark Philo cried; "we must strike while the iron is hot. I vote that we bring him into this room, and try him fairly by judge and jury. You need not get up, Harry. We'll have him in in a jiffy. Boys, disguise yourselves as much as possible and follow me."

Jackets were turned inside out, masks and handkerchiefs used to hide the features, and soon a motley crowd was on the way to Snaller's room.

The sneak was just talking to sleep, when a damp towel was tied over his mouth and he was lifted out of bed.

A rapper fool's cap was then pressed over his forehead, his hands were tied, and before he could comprehend what was the matter, an imperative voice called on him to dress himself.

He obeyed mechanically, trembling in every limb, as he knew that he was in merciless hands.

"Are you ready?" Philo demanded, muffling his voice so that it sounded hollow and sepulchral.

"Yes," Snaller answered; "but where are you going to take me, and what are you going to do with me?"

"You will see, presently," Philo said; "don't distress yourself, my young friend; you will get no more than you richly deserve."

They hustled him along to Walpole's room, and then Snaller knew for what purpose he had been kidnapped.

Standing in front of his accuser, he looked the picture of misery, and began to whine and snivel.

"I only did my duty," he said, "and if you hurt me I will tell Mr. Makemsmart in the morning, and you know what you will get then."

"I have rather a good notion of what you are likely to get now," Walpole replied, laughing.

"Snaller," said Philo, "do you plead guilty or not guilty to the charge of peaching on a schoolmate?"

"I won't answer unless you let me see your face," Snaller gasped. "I believe I know your voice, and that is enough for me. You had better leave me alone, I tell you."

"Guilty or not guilty?" said Philo again.

"What is the use of keeping up this farce?" Snaller said, trying in vain to pluck up a spirit. "You know very well that I told Mr. Makemsmart, and there is an end of it."

"He pleads guilty!" the boys cried. "Judge, pronounce the sentence on the miscreant."

"You stand convicted by your own lips," Philo said, in an impressive voice; "and although the sentence I am about to pass on you is rather a severe one, you will not be able to say in your heart that you do not merit it."

"Go on," Snaller said; "I must bear all this now, but mind, I will have a most bitter revenge."

"The sentence of the court is," Mark Philo resumed, taking no notice of the interruption, "that you receive twenty-four slaps with a wet towel, that your nose be painted red afterward, and that you be sent to Coventry for the rest of the term."

The four-and-twenty lashes were duly administered, and then he was jerked to his feet.

A cake of vermilion dipped in water was applied lavishly to his nose, and then he was kicked out of the room.

"All right!" he cried, through the keyhole. "I dare say you think that you have done a very clever thing, but you'll jolly soon find out your mistake."

"Just hand me my pewter squirt out of my box," Philo whispered to Baldwin; "I'll stop his tongue in an instant."

Snaller went down on his knees revilling those who had tortured him, when Philo, squirt in hand, approached the door.

"You are a lot of cowardly brutes," Snaller whined. "You are a lot of——"

He said no more, and the boys shrieked with laughing, while Snaller's howling and spluttering on the other side of the door, and regardless of all consequences, they cheered loudly as they heard him shuffling away to his room.

"Do you think that he'll tell Mr. Makemsmart?" Tony Limpback asked.

"He can do just as he pleases about that," Baldwin replied. "If he does, we will give him another but larger dose of the same physic, and if he does not soon get tired of peaching he has more powers of endurance than I gave him credit for."

The words were scarcely out of his mouth when Tony Limpback extinguished the candle hastily and bolted under the nearest bed.

"What is the meaning of that extraordinary proceeding?" Walpole demanded. "Have you taken leave of your senses?"

"Hush!" Tony whispered, "there is somebody at the door."

"Yes, there is somebody at the door," Job Langford's voice said, from the room. "I have dropped on you at last, have I? All right, my beauties; you won't get much good change hout o' this game; and I takes all the names o' the boys as is 'ere."

Quick as lightning, Walpole hurled a pillow at the candlestick carried by Job Langford, and in the darkness and confusion half a pound of soap was thrown, and struck the porter between the eyes.

"Bust you all!" he yelled, staggering against the wall. "I'll smash the lot o' you."

It was all very well for him to talk in this violent and disagreeable fashion, but the accomplishment of his revenge he found quite a different matter.

His hair was pulled, his nose was tweaked, his toes were trodden upon, and after striking and kicking at nothing for nearly ten minutes, he was glad to find his way out of the door.

CHAPTER XXX.

A BAD TOOTH WHICH WOULDN'T COME OUT—MR. PULLEM IS VIOLENTLY PUSHED—A FEE FOR NOTHING.

"WHAT is the matter with you, Snaller?" Mr. Makemsmart demanded, next day. "You look as if you had not been to sleep all night."

"I—I—I have had the toothache very bad," Snaller whined, glancing at Walpole, who looked at him as much as to say, "Utter a word, if you dare, and take the consequences."

"Toothache?" Mr. Makemsmart said, testily. "I can't have that sort of thing in my school. Mr. Writher?"

"Yes, sir," the usher replied.

"Call on Mr. Pullem, the dentist, and ask him to look in to draw Snaller's tooth."

"Oh, lor'!" the sneak whined; "if you please, sir, I don't want it drawn. It's much better now."

"I don't care," the schoolmaster replied. "You will have it again, and I won't have you going about looking as if you were half starved."

Snaller sat down with great difficulty, and shed bitter tears in his cassock, and Mr. Writher, who rejoiced at anybody's suffering but his own, ran round to Mr. Pullem as soon as possible.

The dentist came, carrying a very suggestive-looking case of instruments under his arm, and Snaller was sent for.

The wretched youth could not be found for more than a quarter of an hour, but at last he was discovered in a dark cupboard by Walpole.

"Come and have the poor tooth out," Harry said. "Here's the dentist waiting for you with such a beautifully bright pair of pincers."

"You leave me alone," Snaller gasped, kicking frantically. "I'll tell Mr. Makemsmart how you served me."

"And get an awful whacking for telling a fib in the first instance," Walpole said. "Do as you like; but if I were you I'd rather have a tooth out."

"I won't."

"Well," Walpole replied, "it's nothing to me. Mr. Makemsmart sent me after you, and now that I have found you, it is my duty to take you to him, so come along."

Snaller knew that resistance was useless, and he followed Walpole to Mr. Makemsmart's study, where Mr. Pullem, dressed in a dead-black suit of tight clothes, looked very much like an executioner without his axe.

"Sit down, Snaller," Mr. Makemsmart said, kindly; "our friend here will give you as little pain as possible. You will feel much better when the bad tooth is out."

"Oh, if you please, sir," Snaller said, beginning to snivel, "I am quite well now. It's a good tooth, and I wish to keep it."

"It can't be a good one if it aches," Mr. Makemsmart thundered. Mr. Pullem, examine that boy's mouth. I will hold the back of his head."

Mr. Pullem bowed and approached Snaller.

"My boy," said the dentist, "this is wrong. You should not tear a pinch; think of how the soldiers——"

"I have nothing to do with soldiers," Snaller shrieked. "You shan't take a tooth out of my head. I won't tell you which it is, and you dare not take the wrong tooth out."

"Here, I've had quite enough of this," Mr. Makemsmart said. "Mr. Pullem, look for yourself. I am quite certain that your experience will enable you to judge."

Snaller set up a most dismal howl as Mr. Pullem forced his mouth open.

"It is the hollow one," he said; "keep his head tight and it will soon be over."

Desperation lent Snaller strength.

Doubling his legs up he suddenly lunged out, and both his feet took effect on Mr. Pullem's waistcoat.

The dentist staggered across the room and fell into a corner, where he sat gasping for breath.

Mr. Makemsmart released Snaller's head and ran to Mr. Pullem's assistance.

"I hope you are not hurt," he said. "My dear sir, look up at me and don't roll your eyes about in that fearful manner."

"I'm dying," the injured gentleman groaned. "It's all over. Oh, dear! oh, dear! send for a doctor."

"Behold your work, you villain!" Mr. Makemsmart yelled, as he shook his fist at Snaller. "You have murdered this poor man."

Mr. Pullem, however, was a long way from dying, and, leaning on Mr. Makemsmart's arm, he managed to walk up and down the room.

"Tell that boy to get out of my sight," Mr. Pullem gasped, "or I shall do him a mischief."

Snaller, only too glad to get out of the room, bolted as if his life was in danger.

He very wisely retired to his own room, and got into bed.

He dared not show his face down-stairs, and went without his dinner.

I'll serve them out for this," he said, spitefully. "I know they are all against me; but the time will come when they will wish they had never seen me."

CHAPTER XXXI.

A PLOT—WILLIAM WRITES A LETTER—THE RESULT.

"I WANT you," said Titus, eying his son narrowly, "to pluck up a little spirit and write a letter."

"Write a letter, fayther?" William gasped. "Who to?"

William, open-eyed and open-mouthed, with amazement listened to the plot, but even when Titus came to the part where the schoolboys were to suffer and beg for pity on their bended knees, he did not laugh much.

It was arranged that William should write the challenge, and, as soon as the requisite materials were brought in, the rosy-cheeked boy went to work.

He squared his elbows, shot his left leg out behind the chair, put out his tongue, and squinted hideously at the paper.

Having tried the pen, he made a few blots, which he endeavored to remove with his coat-sleeve, and then declared himself ready.

"Wot am I to say, fayther?" he asked.

"Now, William, write the very words as I speaks."

William made another blot, and removed it with the end of his tongue.

The following is the interesting epistle which was written, sealed up with a piece of brown soap in a dirty envelope, and posted to Tony:

"Mister Limpback, Sir,—My name is William Salt, and mi fayther see as I must punch your ed to save the onor of the family. If you aint aleared to come down to the beach to-morrer arter noon about five o'clock. I'll meete you there, and see wich is the best.—Yures trooly, William."

When Tony Limpback received the letter he turned it over between his finger and thumb, stared at the address, and gasped dibiously at the way in which it had been sealed.

"It must come from some maniac," he said to Bertie Baldwin. "I am quite sure none of my friends would send me a letter in such a filthy state."

"The best way to ease your mind is to open it and see who it comes from," Bertie Baldwin replied.

Tony Limpback did so, and as he read he shouted and stamped his feet for very glee.

"Here's a lark!" he cried, as he handed the letter to Bertie Baldwin. "William has plucked up courage to offer to fight me. I admire him, and will send an answer back at once."

"Don't be in such a hurry," Bertie Baldwin said. "I think we ought to take Walpole's advice first."

"What for?"

"Because I smell a rat," Bertie replied. "This is only a blind."

"Do you think so?"

"I am sure of it," Baldwin said. "This is only a conspiracy. Where is Harry?"

"There he goes across the playground."

Baldwin shouted, and Walpole turned round and ran up the stairs, closely followed by Willie Howard.

"Well," said Bertie Baldwin, after Walpole had perused the mysterious document, "what do you think of it?"

"I think that if two or three went down to the beach they would get an awful licking," Walpole replied. "Oh, no, Mr. Salt, we are not to be caught like that; but, nevertheless, Tony will go."

"Not if I know it," Tony replied; "it ain't likely that I'm going to be half killed just to please anybody."

"But you are not going to be half killed or injured in any way," Walpole replied, "for the whole school, save Smaller—and I wouldn't have him at any price—will be there to see fair play."

"If we went down in a body our enemies would flee, and leave us a bloodless battle," Baldwin said.

"Can't you think of another plan?"

"My dear boy," said Harry Walpole, "if you will leave it to me all will be well. You have made me your captain, and I expect that you will obey me."

"Of course we will," said Willie Howard. "Three cheers for Walpole, and down with our enemies."

The boys caught up the shout, and the rafters rang again—indeed, so much noise was created that Mr. Makemsmart sent up word by Job Langford that a repetition would bring him amongst them like a thousand of bricks.

Job, on delivering the message, was favored with a variety of missiles, and he returned impressed more than ever with the idea that the boys were demons.

Mr. Makemsmart was so pleased at what he thought a sudden change in the conduct of his "pupils," that he not only praised them, but promised an extra half-holiday.

In batches of four or five the boys strolled leisurely to the beach, and hit themselves in the furse. Not a word was spoken, not a sound uttered, but all eyes were directed to the distant winding road, on the look-out for Tony.

He came at last, and alone.

Walking quietly down the steps cut in the cliff, he ran toward the spot where old Salt and William stood, looking as innocent as possible.

Not twenty yards away, hidden from view, lurked Jonah Slapdasher, Soker, Maryiar, and half a dozen beachmen.

"He's alone," William cried, joyfully. "Oh, father, ain't this nice?"

"He won't say so," Titus said, spitefully. "But we must pretend that all is fair and square till he gets warm."

"Good-afternoon, Mr. Salt and William," Tony Limpback said; "you see I have kept my promise."

"Yes, I see as 'ow you're here," Titus said; "but why didn't you bring somebody to see fair play?"

"Oh! I am quite able to take care of myself," Tony said, thrusting his hands into his pockets. "I didn't care to ask my chums to come down and see such a trifle. It will be all over in five minutes."

"That may be your opinion, but it ain't mine," Titus said. "William, go in and win. I'll hold your jacket."

William, feeling quite sure that he was not going to be hurt, complied cheerfully, and put up his two fists.

Tony Limpback did not remove a single article of clothing, knowing full well that no fight was intended, but he managed, nevertheless, to give William a stinger.

"Oh, faythor!" William yelled, sitting down flat on the pebbly shore.

"Hup and hat 'im!" Titus roared, and a dozen forms rose, as it were, from the earth and closed round Tony.

Instead, as it had been expected, that the boy would cry for mercy, Tony very coolly felt in his waistcoat pocket, drew out a whistle, and sounded a shrill call upon it.

The signal was answered by a shout, and in less time than it takes to write it, the boys were swarming like bees down the cliffs.

"Now," said Tony, calmly, as he folded his arms, "perhaps you will tell me what is the meaning of all this. You see, after all, I did not forget to bring a few friends to see fair play, Mr. Salt."

"Let me get at the little wretch," Maryiar yelled; but the words were scarcely out of her mouth when the boys charged in a body, and drove the beachmen down to the sea.

Maryiar managed to escape, but William presently found himself standing on his head in the middle of a billow.

Pints of salt-water rushed down his mouth, and when, half-blinded, he managed to crawl out, he beheld his beloved "faythor" being held down by half a dozen boys, while Tony laid on with a rope's-end.

William beat a rapid retreat, and by this time all those who had come to annihilate Tony were half way up the cliff.

"Don't you think he has had enough?" Tony Limpback said, as Titus Salt gave vent to a hollow groan. "I've given him a dozen stingers."

"Give him one more, for luck, and let him go," Walpole replied. "Let it be a good one for the last."

"Oh, you brutes!" Titus yelled. "Mur—der! Oh, lor'! you have cut me in halves."

The boys danced wildly round him for a few minutes, and then allowed him to crawl away.

The boys returned home, singing and shouting a kind of war-song, and so satisfied were they with their triumph that they forgot to drive any of the tradesmen out of their minds.

"I said we should have another lark before the end of the term," Walpole said. "And as we shall be here only ten days longer, we must not waste any time."

"I say," Baldwin cried out, "do you know that Mrs. Nudgeham is going away to-night? She got early leave, and Mr. Writher is going to drive her down to the station.

"Are you quite sure of that?" Walpole asked.

"Quite," Bertie replied. "I heard her tell Job that she should want him to cord her boxes up."

"Then," said Walpole, "we will kill two birds with one stone, or, in other words, have two larks in one day.

"I say," Tony Limpback cried, opening his eyes as widely as possible, "isn't that coming it a little too strong?"

"You can keep out of the way if you like," Walpole replied. "I owe Writher a grudge, and I mean to pay him out, now that I've got the chance."

"Oh! don't think that I mean to stand out," Tony said. "I thought the fellows were tired and wouldn't be up to it. What is your idea?"

"That's my business for the present," Walpole replied; but I want you to get a sheet, and a couple of night-lights. I will manage the rest."

"You are as brimful of ideas as an egg is full of meat," Tony Limpback said, admiringly. "Hurrah! we are finishing up well, and no mistake."

Need I say that the boys returned to the school with good appetites?

To use a common parlance, they walked into the thick wedge of bread-and-butter and weak tea in the most astonishing manner, and Mr. Makemsmart looked on in wonder as Job replaced plateful after plateful.

CHAPTER XXXII.

MR. WRITHER TAKES MRS. NUDGEHAM TO THE STATION —A HORSE THAT WOULDN'T GO, AND THE REASON.

AT eight o'clock, Mrs. Nudgeham came to bid the boys good-by, but she was considerably disappointed to find but a very few there.

"I'd make a wager," Mr. Makemsmart said, angrily, "that those young scapegraces have gone down to the station without leave. I will flog them all round when they come back."

"Don't do that, sir," Mrs. Nudgeham pleaded. "If they have gone, it is only a proof of their affection for me."

"Very well," Mr. Makemsmart grumbled; "I suppose I must give in; but if they think they can trifle with my patience it is near the end of the term, they will find themselves very much mistaken."

He uttered this speech in such a terrible voice that Smaller, and several small boys who had been left out of the fun, trembled.

A light chaise had been procured to convey Mrs. Nudgeham to the station, and when she reached the door Mr. Writher had already taken a seat on the wrong side, and held the reins twisted up in his hand. He was not used to driving, and he did not like the looks of the horse—a bob-tailed, raw-boned animal.

However, in a weak moment, Mr. Writher had undertaken to see Mrs. Nudgeham safely to the station, and could not get out of it now.

Mrs. Nudgeham got in, and the horse swerved round and nearly threw Mr. Writher into the road.

"What is the matter with the brute?" the usher said, turning pale; "why doesn't he go on?"

"Oh, do make haste!" Mrs. Nudgeham cried; "we have only a quarter of an hour to catch the train, and two miles to go."

"I wish I had never offered to make a fool of myself!" Mr. Writher groaned, under his breath, as he tugged at the reins. "Gee up, you beast!"

But the beast did not "gee up" for some minutes, but when he did, he set off at a furious gallop, and, regardless of those behind him, continued his wild career for nearly a mile.

Then, to Mr. Writher's consternation, he came to a full stop, and nearly flung his driver over.

"This is truly awful!" the usher gasped. "Great heaven! what is that on the gate?"

Mrs. Nudgeham screamed and threw her arms around Mr. Writher's neck.

"It's a ghost!" she exclaimed. "Oh, mercy on us, I shall faint!"

"So shall I!" Mr. Writher yelled. "Mur—der!" There upon the gate sat an object so hideous that the horse trembled, and broke out into a lather which for a time no amount of exercise could have produced.

The spectre, or whatever it was, was clothed in white; but this was not all.

Its eyes were red, and threw out rays of fiery light, and, as the wind stirred its garments, it seemed to be making preparations to come down from the gate.

"Take your arms from round my neck, woman!" Mr. Writher roared.

"I will not," Mrs. Nudgeham screamed. "You shall not leave me in peril!"

"Spirit!" Mr. Writher gasped, "depart and leave us in peace."

The spirit, however, did not depart, and presently the truth flashed through Mr. Writher's brain.

"We have been hoaxed," he said, trying to smile. "It is merely a dummy, as I will prove to you if you will allow me to get out of the trap."

"Oh, don't leave me!" Mrs. Nudgeham cried, clinging tighter than ever. "I shall die if I am left here alone."

Mr. Writher objected to be choked in the prime of life, and shaking Mrs. Nudgeham off, he struck at the spectre, and it collapsed into two sticks, a sheet, and two night-lights, shining through as many pieces of red glass.

"I thought as much," he said, viciously. "Oh, those boys!"

"And that is why they left the school to go down to the station," Mrs. Nudgeham cried; "and I was fool enough to think that they were fond of me. The disgraceable little wretches—I hate every one of them!"

"So do I," Mr. Writher said, and the sentiment came from the bottom of his heart.

"Very well, then, that they are well flogged," Mrs. Nudgeham continued; "they deserve it richly."

"They do," the usher replied, "and it will be no fault of mine if your wish is not carried out to the letter."

The five minutes' bell was ringing when the chaise bearing Mrs. Nudgeham and Mr. Writher jolted into the yard.

"Good gracious!" said the housekeeper, "I declare if those wicked urchins are not here before us!"

"So they are," Mr. Writher gasped. "This impudence is unbearable."

"Hurrah!" the boys shouted. "Good-by, Mrs. Nudgeham! Merry Christmas and a Happy New year!"

"I'd merry Christmas you if I had my mind," the housekeeper screamed, shaking her umbrella at the boys. "Oh, you little wretches."

"This is what we get for being civil," Harry Walpole was shaking his head reproachfully. "Never mind, lads; let us return good for evil, and give her another cheer."

This so exasperated Mr. Writher that he commenced slashing away with the whip at everything and everybody.

"Hallo there," growled a porter, suddenly clasping his cheek; "keep that thing still, or I'll show you where you can get a night's lodging free, gratis, and all for nothing."

"I mean to tell you, my good man," Mr. Writher said, fumbling in his waistcoat pocket for a shilling. "Turn those boys out of the station, or they will drive me out of my senses."

This was much easier said than done, as the boys were scattered about like a flock of refractory sheep; and it would have taken a regiment of soldiers to have got them together.

After some trouble, and no little swearing at the officials, Mrs. Nudgeham's luggage was labeled and stowed safely away in the guard's break, while the lady was persuaded to enter a carriage just as the engine gave a wild shriek and dragged the train slowly out of the station.

Mr. Writher stood with his hat planted firmly on the back of his head, and the whip raised in the air, determined to smite the first boy who crossed his path.

A policeman roared out:

"Your 'orse have runned away, sir."

"My horse!" Mr. Writher murmured, speaking like one talking in his sleep. "My horse, friend!"

"Yes, the one as you brought down with the lady," the policeman cried, "and he's been and gone and run into a coal-cart, and there's a precious spill."

Mr. Writher bolted out.

The policeman had spoken the truth.

There was a coal-cart lying upon its side, a few pieces of varnished wood which had once belonged to a chaise; but the horse was nowhere to be seen.

Writher started off in pursuit.

Following several men, he soon saw, to his dismay, the rampant steed in the hands of at least a dozen powerful men.

Soker was one of the party, and as noisy as twenty.

"All 'ot right," he cried, addressing the concourse, "have a man as don't know the tail from the 'ead of a 'oss to take the reins! I see the fole start, and I knowed he'd do summat to talk about."

Mr. Writher heard every word, and rage filled his manly breast.

In a shrill and almost unintelligible voice he asked Soker what he meant by his insolence.

"Just you get away," Soker said, giving the usher a push which sent him flying back on to an old gentleman's gouty toes; "we'll take the 'oss back. I say, 've had a glass too much, and if you'll take my advice, you go 'ome and get inter bed afore you're locked up."

"You libelous scoundrel," Mr. Writher gasped, "how dare you say that I am drunk? Leave that horse alone, sir, or I'll have you prosecuted for stealing it."

At this moment the boys came up, and siding with Mr. Writher, a general fight took place for the possession of the untamed and fiery steed, and Soker soon came to the conclusion that he was much better out of the way.

He relaxed his hold of the horse's head, and contenting himself by giving Mr. Writher one dig in the waistcoat, fled.

The quadruped—the cause of so much mischief—stood perfectly still, and with his head cocked waggishly on one side, watched the fray, and when it was over he suffered himself to be led passively away by Mr. Writher.

"It is villainous!" the usher cried; "it is past human endurance that I should be dragged into such a scene as this."

"Who is to pay for the chaise?" he groaned, after a pause. "Mr. Makemsmart will not, and I cannot. Confound it, I must have been a fool to drive a strange horse; but it is all through that idiotic ghost business, and you boys shall suffer for it."

(To be continued.)

The "Three Merry Boys" was commenced in No. 636.

INVENTIVE BEN;

Or,

How a Boy Became a Jack-of-all-Trades and Master, Too.

BY COMMODORE AH-LOOK.

CHAPTER XXV.

GETTING EVEN WITH THE TRAMPS.

THE baker, a long, lanky individual, glanced at Ben, and replied:

"Do I look as if I required any help?"

When, returning his survey, the lad answered:

"Well, if you want me to tell you the truth, I guess you do."

"I'd like to know what you are fit for?" continued the man. "You tramps never amount to anything."

"Tramps!" ejaculated the indignant boy. "I'm no tramp. I'm from Scrub Oak, and my name is Ben Thatcher."

"Do you know Perkins, the smith?" inquired the other.

"I should think I do," was Ben's rejoinder.

"Well, then, describe him," said the man. "He's a friend of mine."

Whereupon, his visitor gave such a graphic account of his old employer, and of several other persons who lived in his native place, that he fully convinced the baker of the truth of his statement, and was forthwith engaged as assistant in the business.

"I shan't want you until six o'clock," directed Mr. Plummer. "You'll have to work at night, so if you wish to sleep, you can go up into the attic and turn in."

On hearing which, our young friend wrote and posted a letter to his uncle, requesting a remittance of twenty-five dollars, and, having done this, retired to rest.

As the clock struck six, the boss summoned him and introduced the boy to the two men who were in the bakery, shifting their ordinary garments for working-suits, and who received him pleasantly enough, and set him to work sifting flour into a long trough.

"Hilt anything stolen to-day?" inquired one of them, addressing their employer.

"Two pies," sighed Plummer. "I've had a visit from the English inventor, and he says he will fit my store with burglar-alarms for two hundred dollars."

"Better lose a few pies," laughingly suggested the second baker.

"I'd like to catch the thief or thieves. I'd stop them from coming again," said the first. "It's my opinion your inventor is the culprit."

"What is he like?" put in Ben.

"He's a foreigner!" replied Plummer. "He can't have stolen anything from me, as he only reached here this morning. He called to buy some bread just after I missed the last pie, and I told him of it."

Thatcher did not make any further remark, but helped the workmen to pour a lot of sour stuff they called yeast into the trough, and when it was mixed with the flour, and water was added, aided them in the various operations, until three barrels of prime St. Louis had been converted into dough, when they rested, and partook of a hearty meal provided by their employer, who had long before retired to bed. Then came a spell of smoking on the part of the men and slumber for Ben, after which, he was aroused, and following the instructions of his companions, was soon hard at work kneading the sticky masses and molding them into bread, each batch as it was made up being set aside to rise, then put in the oven, and at daylight the hot loaves were ready for customers.

The boy was as tired as a dog by the time the work was over, and having eaten his breakfast, was glad enough to go to bed. However, toward the afternoon he arose, and hearing voices in the shop below, listened, soon discovering that the speakers were Plummer and the tramp who had so cruelly stripped him of his clothes.

"I don't think I can afford your burglar detector," remarked the baker; "it's too expensive. Besides, nobody has tried to rob my till, which I keep locked, and all your contrivance is good for is to guard that."

"Very well," carelessly returned the other; "I'll call again in a few days," then the lad heard him leave the store.

This conversation was highly interesting to the young inventor, who, after dressing himself, descended to where his employer was, and having related his experience with the rascal who had just departed, obtained permission to exercise his ingenuity in exposing the fellow.

Requesting Plummer to remove the money from the drawer, the boy soon fixed an arrangement, and connected it with a strong cord leading into the bakery, and bidding the boss go out for a walk, took his place in the store.

In a very short time back came the tramp, accompanied by Sly Sammy, who, not having seen Ben by daylight, did not know him from Adam.

Both of them were dressed in the suits they had stolen from him, and their faces being shaven, appeared quite respectable, the inventive thief acting as spokesman.

"Well, boy," he began, smiling in a patronizing way, "is your master out?"

"Ye-as," drawled the lad, looking as green as though he had never seen them. "What do you wa-ant?"

"This is my friend, Mr. Samuel, from Liverpool," continued the first speaker. "He requires change for a ten-dollar bill. Will you kindly give it to him?"

"There's lots of money locked up in the till. Mr. Plummer has got the key of it," said Ben, as simply as possible. "But, if you like, I'll put on my coat and get your bill changed."

"Will you trust him?" said the man, turning to his friend, Sly Sammy.

"Oh, I think we can," answered the other, with a wink.

"All right," gaped Ben, walking into the bakery, where he closed a door with a bang, as though he had gone out, then seized the line of the machine, connected with the till, and braced himself for an effort.

He soon heard that the inventor's name was Daniel, and discovered that Sly Sammy was the rascal's brother.

"Now, Sam," whispered Dan, "that fool of a boy being out of the way, I'll drop behind the counter and clear the till; you keep watch;" thereupon came a sound like the picking of a lock, and Ben knew the speaker was at the cash-drawer.

It required but a few seconds for the tramp to turn the bolt, after which the cord in the lad's hand received a gentle jerk, and the till came flying out about an inch, where, spite of the operator's efforts, it stuck.

"Come here, Sammy," he whispered, "and put both your hands inside this with me."

Thatcher smiled grimly when he heard these words, for he knew that he would catch both instead of one of the rascals.

Simultaneously inserting their hands in the drawer, they grasped the front, and, leaning backward, endeavored to wrench it out; but the same time Ben tugged on the cord and released a powerful spring, causing the apparatus to close upon their fingers and hold them in its vise-like grip.

For a moment the delighted lad listened to their yells and moans of pain, then putting on his jacket, he combed his hair, washed his hands, deposited the ten-dollar bill in his pocket, picked up his stick, and chuckling at the success of his invention, quitted the place.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A DEATH-TRAP.

THATCHER sauntered along the block at the rear of the bakery, and, turning the corner, presently arrived on the front street, where he looked about him as unconsciously as though he had come from a walk up-town.

"There's trouble going on in your boss's store," remarked a passer-by, pointing toward Plummer's.

"You don't say," drawled Ben, advancing and elbowing his way through the crowd gathered about the entrance. "Here, let me pass!"

As he pushed in he saw a neighbor in charge of the place, and beheld the tramps, who, in their struggles to release themselves, had twisted on to the counter, over which they were lying like a child across its mother's knees, just put in position for a spanking.

"I've kept folks out for you," remarked the man, as he prepared to quit; "if I hadn't something would have been stolen. I can't make out those fellows. I think they are in a fit," by which it was quite evident he did not know that their hands were caught in Ben's contrivance.

"I'll cure them, mister," calmly responded the boy. "I've got something here will bring them round. Thanks; you need not stay," and, having closed the door after his visitor, as a precaution against an invasion of the mob, he approached the prisoners, and said: "You want your change, don't you? Did you expect to find it in there?"

"Oh, my goodness, let us out!" they chorused.

"Somebody has played us a nice trick."

"It was I," innocently answered our young friend. "When you mean critters met me on the road here, you took it out of my skin, now I'm going to give you your change;" saying which he grasped the thin end of his knob-stick and proceeded to larrup their coat-tails, while the spectators flattened their noses against the door and windows, and grinned with delight.

"Crack, whack!" went his stick, and the would-be till-tappers writhed, twisted, groaned, moaned, yelled and kicked; but there was no let up for them until the tired-out operator could no longer raise his weapon.

"Ray!" cried the crowd, as Plummer arrived upon the scene, and, entering the store, inquired the cause of the assemblage.

"I've caught them, boss!" panted Thatcher, pointing to the tramps, as the latter reclined limply over the counter. "They are your precious inventor and his amiable brother, the cusses who met me on my way to this place and treated me like a dog."

"What made you lick them so badly?" asked his employer, as Ben released the pair.

"Well," drawled the lad, "they said they wanted a little change, so I gave it to them as they did it to me. I guess we are about even now—ain't we, fellers? My name is inventive Ben. How do you like my style of burglar alarm?"

As he spoke a policeman arrived, and the prisoners were marched off to the City Hall, Plummer locking the door of his store and following the crowd with his assistant, on whose face had settled a most comical smile.

Upon arriving at the court-room they found the tramps lying upon the floor, groaning as though they had been half killed.

"What right had you to beat those men so shamefully?" sternly demanded the magistrate, glancing at the baker.

"It wasn't the boss, your honor," put in Thatcher. "It was I who caught them, but I didn't lick them."

"He did! he did!" chorused the prisoners, rising, and exhibiting their bruised arms and blubbering like children. "He stole our ten-dollar bill, then beat us, he did."

"You must be a perfect little fiend to treat two men in that fashion," indignantly observed the justice. "Release the prisoners, and put that boy in their place," hearing which Ben said:

"One moment, if you please! I deny having done anything but *clean* my *own clothes*. There ain't any law against that, is there?"

"Eh!" snapped the official. "What do you mean?"

Whereupon the boy related how he had been robbed, stripped, and left to die, for all the tramps had cared, ending his narrative with:

"If you examine the suits they are wearing you will find 'B. T.' marked inside them—Benjamin Thatcher, that's me."

Spite of the vagabonds' piteous howls and pleas that they could not remove their coats, they were taken into a private room and searched, when the truth of his statement was immediately proved, and on the pair being brought back into the court they were committed for trial.

"I mistook you for a simpleton," said the magistrate to Ben, as he concluded the case and rose in order to leave. "I have generally found that ignorance and brutality go hand in hand. You really appear to be smarter than you look."

"Well, yes," drawled the boy. "Very few people take me to be a fool."

"I would like to see your invention for capturing robbers," pompously continued the official. "What do you call it? Perhaps I might buy one of you."

"Well," slyly responded the young rascal, "when I make an apparatus to fix tramps, I term it 'Thatcher's patent thief-nipper,' but when I design it for ordinary folks and such, I call it my 'fool-catcher'"; adding, naively, "I shall be very pleased to show you how it works. I think it is in your line."

A reply that was more relished by the audience than by the person to whom it was addressed.

It is needless to say Ben did not get an order from the gentleman. However, that did not trouble him, and half an hour afterward he was hard at work in the bakery. But his day's success made him feel more than ever that inventing was his business, spite of which he stuck to his resolve to learn the trade.

The next morning he received some money from his uncle, and having purchased a new outfit, felt more comfortable than he had done in his Winter clothes.

Several weeks passed, and Thatcher had become almost as useful to his employer as either of the men, so Plummer raised his pay; however, not having anything to invent, the boy grew low-spirited, yet he did not like to give up the business.

One night, when he was bringing in wood for the oven, he saw a form sneak off from the pile, and upon reporting the circumstance to his boss, was informed that the latter knew he was robbed, but could never find out who was the thief.

"One of the neighbors, I should say," suggested Ben. "I think I could fix something to cure them."

"No, it ain't neighbors," answered the other. "And I don't believe you will succeed. I've many and many a time loaded a log with gunpowder, but they are so smart that they always detect the ping and never get blown up."

INVENTIVE BEN.—"'CRACK, WHACK!' WENT HIS STICK, AND THE WOULD-BE TILL-TAPPERS WRITHED, TWISTED, GROANED, MOANED, YELLED AND KICKED; BUT THERE WAS NO LET-UP FOR THEM UNTIL THE TIRED-OUT OPERATOR COULD NO LONGER RAISE HIS WEAPON."—SEE PAGE 87.

Still Ben said he could do the trick, and from that moment laid his plans.

Just outside the building was a cellar-flap, bolted underneath like a trap-door, and it was near this the fire-wood, consisting of beech, birch and oak logs, was stacked.

Removing the old iron-work, the boy fixed the flap so that on his touching a spring in the bakery the trap would fall inward, there, after exhibiting it to his delighted boss, he deposited several sacks of soot beneath it, in order that the thief, while half smothered in the black powder, would land softly, and this done, awaited developments.

Night after night passed and no one was heard at the pile, and they began to think they would fail to discover the robber.

"I tell you," remarked one of the bakers, "it's a person who knows all the ins and outs of this place, and you will never catch them," when the indicator of the machinery showed that some one had stepped upon the fatal spot.

"Schsch!" cautioned the lad. "You wait a moment!"

And presently the listeners heard a stick moved, whereupon Ben pressed the spring; then came a cry, the bang caused by the falling of the trap, and a smothered groan.

"Call the boss!" shouted one of the workmen, as he lighted a lantern, and in a few moments down came Plummer in his night-garments.

"I've nicked him!" triumphantly exclaimed Thatcher. "Caught him in the very act. Shall I go and bring him up?"

"No; send for an officer," said their employer. "We are going to to do this thing legally. You go outside, Ben, with John Murphy, and prevent the rascal from escaping, and I'll wait here while Jim Crupper fetches a policeman."

Putting on their coats, in order not to get chilled by the night-air, the boy and man took up their positions as directed, while the other employé started for the station-house.

"He's awful still, ain't he?" whispered the lad, endeavoring to peep into the cavity.

"I believe he's dead!" was the awe-stricken response.

"Nonsense!" murmured the other.

For some moments Ben's heart beat violently. What if his invention had resulted in the death of a fellow-being?

"I can see his head," breathed his companion. "But he's done for."

Once more the boy replied "Nonsense!" spite of which a terrible feeling took possession of his soul.

"I wish I hadn't fixed the blamed old thing!" he muttered. "Confound it, they'll hang me," when a couple of policemen and the messenger arrived on the spot, and, passing into the bakery, proceeded down the ladder to the place where Thatcher's victim was lying, silently bleeding to death.

(To be continued.)

"Inventive Ben" was commenced in No. 645.

Distinguished Scholars of Jersey City (N. J.) Schools.

JOHN J. GINOCCHIO,

PUPIL OF GRAMMAR SCHOOL NO. 6, CENTRAL AVENUE, JERSEY CITY, N. J.

JOHN J. GINOCCHIO is a distinguished pupil of the first class of Grammar School No. 6, Central Avenue, corner of St. Paul Avenue, Jersey City, N. J. "You can say of him," said Mr. Wakeman, the intelligent Principal, "that he is one of the most successful scholars, and that, while he is gay and light-hearted, he is never guilty of any wrong-doing." He was born in Jersey City in 1865, making him sixteen years of age. He is the son of John B. and C. A. Ginocchio. When but seven years of age he entered a parochial school, and two years later became a pupil in the Primary Department of Grammar School No. 5. He has studied so well that at some of the promotions he has been skipped over classes, and his per centage in both department and study has always been among the highest. He is a tall, erect, good-looking youth, with bright eyes and a cheerful face. He carries sunshine wherever he goes, and he is so intelligent, so amiable and so fixed in good principles, that he is esteemed by all. Those of his own age who associate with him find him the embodiment of manliness and ambition. Modest and yet fearless, gentle and yet resolute, he is one who not only deserves encouragement, but who will apply it to the strengthening of his principles and purposes.

JOHN J. GINOCCHIO, PUPIL OF GRAMMAR SCHOOL NO. 6, CENTRAL AVENUE, JERSEY CITY, N. J.

ALICE C. WILLIS,

PUPIL OF GRAMMAR SCHOOL NO. 6, CENTRAL AVENUE, JERSEY CITY, N. J.

ALICE C. WILLIS is a highly meritorious scholar of Grammar School No. 6, Central Avenue, Jersey City. She was born in New York, September 12th, 1863, and is, therefore, fifteen years of age. She is the daughter of Stephen and Catharine Willis. When six or seven years old she entered the Primary Department of Grammar School No. 42, in this city. She remained in No. 42 until she had reached the second grammar class. Her record was one of merit throughout. In all the studies she was an attentive and intelligent learner, and when she left the school it was with the regret of the teachers and their united good wishes. Having removed to Jersey City, she became a pupil in one of the grammar classes of her present school. Her modest deportment and amiable characteristics won for her the favorable opinion of her classmates and teachers. She is now in the highest class, and she has rivals of both sexes in the intellectual struggle for the places of honor in the class. With a display of the characteristics which are most attractive in a modest and ladylike person, still she has the vigor and zeal which are necessary to success. Culture is sought by her because it is refining and elevating, and because it is in harmony with her own pure nature.

A MODERN MIRACLE.

The Astonishing Case of Miss Fancher.

OF course many of our young readers have already heard something about Miss Fancher, but for the benefit of those who have not we intend to give a short account of this extraordinary person.

Miss Mary J. Fancher has lain in bed, in the position shown in our engraving, for thirteen years, much of that time being in a trance-like condition. At times she has been transformed into a cheerful, vivacious, intelligent, entertaining young woman, and then she has relapsed into speechlessness, blindness, deafness and entire paralysis of the senses.

She has also developed most astonishing powers of second-sight, or clairvoyance, reading with ease the contents of sealed letters, describing articles in hidden packages, perusing books while absolutely blind. So little nourishment has she taken, that it may be said she lives without food.

At the age of fourteen, Mary J. Fancher was sent to the Brooklyn Heights Seminary, near Montague Street, and there she remained for four years. About that time, in a horseback ride, she fell, and several of her ribs were broken. From the injury she quickly recovered, only to meet with another and more serious accident.

As she was alighting from a horse-car, the conductor, thinking that she had stepped to the ground, rang the signal to start, and, turning from her, walked to the front of the car. Miss Fancher's dress caught on the step, and the starting of the vehicle threw her with violence to the ground. The poor girl was dragged a long way before her situation was perceived. Her spine was seriously injured, and her body and head frightfully bruised. It was soon after her last accident that she showed the remarkable physical changes that have since become the object of so much discussion. The days slipped into weeks before she was able to keep any food on her stomach, and it was just short of two months that she was without nourishment. Then very light food was one day given her with seeming beneficial results. She has eaten altogether since that day—nearly fourteen years ago—not so much food as an ordinarily healthful girl of her age would eat in forty-eight hours.

It is when in the condition of trance that Miss Fancher makes her most astonishing revelations. At these times she suddenly starts, as though charged from an electric battery, and instantly becomes rigid in every joint and muscle. Her face at some times takes on a most painful expression, at others one of positive pleasure, yet oftener it is as the face of one who is dead. To those unaccustomed to seeing her, the conviction that she is indeed dead is irresistible. A deathlike pallor creeps over the already pale face, not the slightest movement is perceptible in any of her muscles; she ceases to breathe; her body becomes cold; her heart gives out no pulsations that are easily detected—although her physicians have not convinced themselves that it does not beat.

Every one who has seen her in this condition speaks of the beauty and pathos of the scene—the ashen complexion; the brown, waving hair streaming toward her shoulders, yet not reaching them; the faultless features, neither wrinkled nor drawn nor wasted, and yet not rounded nor ruddy as in her schoolgirl days; one hand and graceful arm transfixed in its position at the instant of attack—perhaps pointing upward, perhaps extended to receive a visitor's salutation, perhaps folded over her breast; the other arm bent behind her head as though she were resting upon it; the eyes closed.

While Miss Fancher's eyes were absolutely sightless, the eyelids being closed and the eyeballs fixed as though in death, she was able with facility, and without seeming effort, to make marvels of fancy-work. For her gentlemen friends she embroidered suspenders and worked slippers and watch-pockets, and for companions of her girlhood she made needlework of all kinds, pincushions, and wax-flowers. Every stitch was in proper place, every shade of colored thread and worsted was correctly drawn. Her handiwork was as near perfection as could be. Some of it was sent to fairs, where, its maker being unknown, it was pronounced superior to all others of its kind exhibited. Sometimes she worked from paper patterns purchased at a fancy-store, sometimes from other fancy-work, but oftener she originated her designs. It was impossible to deceive her in the quality or shade of the materials with which she worked, her rare power of so-called second-sight enabling her to detect any flaw with greater accuracy than did the natural vision of her friends.

The two stories of Miss Fancher's powers of sight-seeing that her friends tell of with the greatest interest are the return of her uncle Isaac from California, and the welcome home, some time afterward, of her lost pet dog. Her uncle, Mr. Isaac Crosby, went to California before the accident to Miss Fancher, and while she was a comparatively little girl. He was strong, healthy and robust, with a full face and a big chest. While in California he contracted consumption, and nine years after his arrival there returned to Brooklyn, and first of all sought Mrs. Crosby, with whom Miss Fancher lives. Professor West, her old instructor, and Mrs. Crosby sat in her room, when the door-bell was rung. Mrs. Crosby started to answer the summons, and as she stepped from the room Miss Fancher exclaimed, in astonished tones:

"Why, it's Uncle Ike!"

"Who is Uncle Ike?" asked Professor West.

"Uncle Ike! Why, he went to California before I went to your school. How he has changed!—how sick he looks!"

And Miss Fancher entertained the professor with a description of the uncle's departure for the land of gold; how he then appeared, and his contrasted physiognomy on his return. Meantime, Mrs. Crosby had opened the door, and, not recognizing her brother, asked the visitor's business. Mr. Crosby had indeed so changed that it required some little talk to convince the sister of his identity. After a half-hour she returned up-stairs and saluted Miss

ALICE C. WILLIS, PUPIL OF GRAMMAR SCHOOL NO. 6, CENTRAL AVENUE, JERSEY CITY, N. J.

Fancher with, "Who do you think is down in the parlor?" and Miss Fancher very promptly answered, "Uncle Ike, of course, and he is very sick." The girl had instantly recognized him, while, of course, it was impossible for her to see him.

Miss Fancher's pet dog had contrived to find a warmer place in her heart than had her other pets. He rarely left her, and he was much of a companion in her long hours of wakefulness. But one day the dog disappeared from the house, and was seen again no more for some time. Miss Fancher mourned for him; but she insisted that he would soon return again, and she seemed to be constantly looking for him. It was about two o'clock, one rainy, tempestuous morning, that she aroused Mrs. Crosby. "Get up, get up!" she cried; "the dog is coming home. I see him away down the avenue. He is coming this way, and will soon be here." Mrs. Crosby did not hurry, and Miss Fancher broke out once more. "Here he comes nearer. Go down and let him in; he'll be here by the time you get to the door. There he is across the street; now he's on the steps." Mrs. Crosby went down, and there was the lost dog, wet, gaunt, hungry, but happy to get home. He was taken to Miss Fancher, and, in the silent hours preceding the break of day, she fed him with the best the house afforded.

A gentleman, who had been a frequent visitor, entered her room, one afternoon, and, laughingly tossing his wallet in the air, said, "Tell me how much change is in there and I will give it to you."

"Sixty-seven cents," was the girl's reply.

The gentleman, who himself did not know how much money the wallet contained, counted its contents. Miss Fancher's declaration had been correct.

Her powers of vision seem to have no limit. She has not only seen and described the appearance and actions of her friends in other cities, but has been able to picture the doings of very near acquaintances, who, for a time, lived in the Bermuda Islands.

Mr. Henry M. Parkhurst, of 173 Gates Avenue, Brooklyn, who is favorably known among scientific men as an astronomer and a student, became interested in Miss Fancher's case early in its development. He has closely watched the changes in her condition, and has kept a complete record of them. He has spent hours at her bedside, and, wishing to satisfy himself from a scientific basis, has made many tests of her powers, and has reached many interesting conclusions.

SEAWAIF;

Or,

THE WHITE KING OF NIMIGI.

The Marvelous Adventures of a Boy, a Monkey and an Elephant in the Wilds of Africa.

By JACK MANLEY,

AUTHOR OF "THREE LIVES," "HUSH THE SHADOW," "GHOSTS OF THE BUCCANEERS," ETC.

CHAPTER XXIV.

IN WHICH MAKO AGAIN DISTINGUISHES HIMSELF, AND AMY GIBBS EXPLAINS.

FOR some minutes Seawaif recollected nothing but that he was pressing the girl he loved to his heart.

Then, having nothing better to do, Namoune fell on the floor and went off in a fit of hysterics.

After pouring so much water on her that Seawaif began to expect to see her washed white, she recovered.

She was calmer now, and having been assisted to her feet, she said:

"You say you love this wretched girl?"

"I do," was the reply.

"You have been offered the love of a great queen, and you reject it."

"I most emphatically do."

"Do you know what the result will be?"

"I don't care a snap what it will be. You may kill me by slow torture, for all I care."

"But if we torture the girl?" asked Namoune, looking keenly into his face.

"Ah—h!" gasped our hero, turning pale.

"If we torture her before your eyes till she goes mad, what then?"

"Nothing!" exclaimed Amy, firmly, looking up for the first time.

"Miserable vassal! Do you dare to speak to me?" cried the queen, beginning to get furious again.

The shrill voice of the queen recalled him to himself.

Namoune was furious.

She shrieked, swore, stamped and raved about in a most unqueen-like fashion, while her subjects, who thronged the hall, drew back in alarm at her anger.

Finally she turned on our hero, fairly livid with wrath in spite of her black skin.

"What means this?" she demanded.

"Exactly what you see," responded Seawaif, calmly.

"What have you to do with this miserable slave?"

"Everything."

"You know her?"

"I do. And, what is more, I love her!"

This reply actually paralyzed the queen for a minute.

Then, with a scream like a wild cat, she commenced clawing the air, and finally bounded at Amy.

Our hero was too quick for her, though, and he whirled the girl aside, so that the queen shot past her and began scratching the face of an old courtier, who happened to be in her road, to pieces.

The aged aristocrat fled as soon as he could get away.

"Yes, I do!" responded the brave girl, flushing scarlet. "He loves me. I love him. You may tear me to pieces before you part us and I will not utter a groan."

"Bravely spoken!" cried Seawaif. "I owe you a reward for those gallant words."

And he kissed her.

Namoune uttered a scream of fury, and her yellow eyeballs became bloodshot, like those of an enraged beast.

"Enough of this!" she cried, hoarsely. "Tear them apart."

"Not while I live!" said our hero, savagely.

And dragging his scimitar from its sheath, he clove the skull of the first man who advanced to execute his sovereign's mandate from crown to chin.

The others fell back dismayed, while the youth, grasping his blood-dripping weapon, looked proudly around him.

"You dogs!" he called, in a loud voice, "I am a white man, and I do not fear you all together. Until you kill me I shall keep on killing you. So let the first who wishes to die come on."

There were no candidates for the proffered honor.

In fact, nobody seemed to entertain the slightest desire to die, for they put as great a distance between themselves and the speaker as possible.

Only the queen, fearless in her anger, dared approach him.

"Since my subjects will not execute my orders," she said, "I will carry them out myself."

And she extended a hand toward her recalcitrant bridegroom.

"Hold on!" said that person, warningly. "You are a woman, and I would not strike you to save my life; but to preserve that of the girl I love I would kill you as readily as I would a dog!"

There was a menacing accent in his voice that was unmistakable, and a braver heart than Queen Namoune's would have quailed before it.

She fell back a pace, looking at him with eyes wild with impotent fury.

"I spared you from the wild beasts," she said, "because I wished a husband."

"There's one, then. Try him."

And with a grin, Seawaif pointed to her throne.

She hurried, and a cry of rage escaped her.

Mako, who in some way had effected his escape from his prison, had found his way into the palace, and now squatted on the jewe'ed throne, making faces at the queen, and watching for a sign from his master to hurt somebody.

When he saw the queen looking at him, catching him in the very act of making fun of her, the ape did as he was accustomed to do when his master caught him doing anything wrong.

He jumped up, placed his hands on his heart, and made an humble bow.

This drove the infuriated monarch of Nimigi into a fever of passion.

She really thought Mako understood what his master said, and offered himself as her spouse in Seawaif's place.

Her courtiers shared her opinion, and were naturally incensed at the indignity put upon their ruler, who, in their eyes, was as great a queen as Victoria is in those of an Englishman.

They were not afraid of the ape, though they did dread his master.

So, while Mako still stood bowing and scraping his humblest, they rushed at him.

Before Seawaif could interfere in behalf of his favorite, the latter took action on his own account.

Seizing the throne by the back, he brought it down with crushing force on the heads of his nearest assailants.

Half a dozen went to earth, bleeding from many

A MODERN MIRACLE.—THE ASTONISHING CASE OF MISS FANCHER.—A YOUNG LADY WHO LIVES WITHOUT EATING, AND DISPLAYS WONDERFUL POWERS OF SECOND-SIGHT.

wounds, and the ivory broke to splinters under the blow.

Using the back, which remained intact, as a war-club, Mako cleared a passage to the nearest wall, and began climbing toward the roof.

Scores of darts and javelins were hurled at him, but they all missed their mark.

When he got high enough he stopped and threw the throne-back, which he had retained hold of, into the crowd.

It struck the queen on the head and knocked her senseless.

A minute later Mako disappeared through a window high up in the wall.

The Nimigians had scattered in terror when their queen fell, and she was at once conveyed to her own apartment.

Then the Fetich priest, who had been one of the foremost figures of the assemblage, approached our hero.

"It would be useless for you to attempt to resist," he said. "You may kill many of us, but you will certainly die yourself in the end."

"We must all die some time," said Seawall, sententiously. "What are you driving at? What do you want?"

"I want you to surrender yourself till the queen recovers and decides on what is to be done with you. You shall not be separated."

"Very well, then. It would be folly, as you say, to resist. I surrender."

The Fetich priest addressed some order to half a dozen soldiers, and our hero and his sweetheart were ushered into one of the rooms opening on the hall.

The apartment was a comfortable one, the only suggestion of a prison about it being the group of sentries outside the curtained door.

Having thrown himself on a divan, Seawalf abandoned himself to all the pleasures of being reunited with his fair friend.

Hours passed like minutes in a conversation which never flagged, and these two prisoners of a barbaric nation, with the unknown doom impending over them, were as happy as any loungers in a drawing-room.

Amy Gibbs's story was as simple as it was romantic.

After Seawalf's disappearance from Southport Si Gibbs had constantly importuned her for her hand.

His father, who was her guardian, seconded his son's claims with a vigor due principally to the fact that he was a miserly old wretch, and did not want to have her money go out of the family.

To escape these persecutions she fled to New York.

She was earning a living by sewing, when one day she saw in the papers the account of Jabe Junks's arrival in Southport, and of the revelations he had made.

Then she determined to go in search of her lover.

Her first task was to make a boy's suit, after which she tried to ship as cabin-boy on some vessel bound for Africa.

But cabin-boys were a drug in the market at the time, and no one would have her.

Finally she stowed away in the forecastle of the schooner *Maria Hawkins*, and was carried out to sea.

On the second day out a sailor discovered her hiding-place.

He ordered her brutally to come out, and what was her horror when she did so to recognize in him Si Gibbs!

He knew her at once, and after beating her most cruelly, drove her aft to the captain.

When the latter heard her story, however, the tables were turned with a vengeance.

Si was tried up in the main rigging and given four dozen lashes, well laid on.

After that he was constantly set at doing the dirtiest and most disagreeable work on the ship.

The captain evinced a great interest in our heroine's plans, and promised her every assistance in his power.

Unfortunately, the wreck and their sale into slavery had upset everything.

"There's only one thing I wonder at," observed our hero.

"What is that? It must be very wonderful, I am sure," said Amy, smiling.

"It is that Si never mentioned you to me."

"I can account for that very easily."

"How?"

"Because he hated us both."

"But what good did silence do for his hatred?"

"Much. He knew that if you were aware of my presence here you would contrive to see me."

"I would, if I had had to dig my way through the mountain to get at you," interrupted Seawalf, energetically.

"And that the knowledge that I was near you would sustain you in your worst troubles."

"It would indeed."

"Therefore, by keeping you in ignorance he deprived you of both hope and consolation."

"I see it all now. Thank heaven the hound has met a just doom."

"Is he dead?"

"Yes."

And our hero related the scene in which Mako had acted as executioner and Si Gibbs as criminal.

"But what are we to do now?" asked Amy, after some desultory conversation.

Seawalf shrugged his shoulders carelessly.

"Trust to luck," he said. "I've learned to rely on it for all it is worth in the last couple of years. It has never deserted me yet, and it will not now, I feel sure."

Here a commotion among the guards interrupted the interview.

Then the curtain at the doorway was pushed aside and Queen Namoune entered.

Her visage assumed a diabolical grin at the sight of her prisoners, so careless of their peril, so full of happiness.

Seawalf saluted her politely; Amy bowed her head.

"Namoune has reflected," began the queen, still regarding them with the same menacing smile. "She spared the white warrior once; she will spare him again."

"The white warrior is infinitely obliged to your majesty, I am sure," said our hero.

"Namoune will do even more. Her generosity, like her mercy, is boundless."

"I am certainly glad to hear it, for our sakes."

"The white warrior loves the pale-faced slave?"

"With all his heart," responded Seawalf, fervently hugging his blushing companion.

The queen frowned and bit her lip, and it was some minutes before she went on.

"Very well; then the pale-faced slave is free."

"Free!" exclaimed Seawalf, starting up. "You give her her freedom?"

"I do. But only on one condition."

"Name it. Whatever it is I will perform it."

"You can easily do so. It is that you marry her."

"Why, good gracious! that's the very thing I want to do."

"In an hour you will be sent for, then."

And the queen went out, her face still wearing the same evil leer.

"This sounds too good to be true," exclaimed our hero, when they were once more alone. "I can scarcely believe my ears."

"There is some trick in it, somewhere," said Amy, thoughtfully, shaking her head. "Queen Namoune is too cruel and vindictive ever to do so kind a thing. There is something behind all this."

"Very well, then," said Seawalf, laughing. "If there is a nigger in the fence we'll see his wool soon. For the present let us be happy. Care killed a cat."

And he stole another kiss, for which he received in return a sounding box on the ear.

CHAPTER XXV.

LAST SCENE OF THIS STRANGE, EVENTFUL HISTORY.

AS Amy suggested, the sable queen's generosity was much more apparent than real.

In fact, she had conceived a diabolical scheme to gratify her passion and satisfy her jealousy.

She had fallen madly in love with the daring white adventurer.

His long, tawny hair, bold blue eyes and fair skin, his handsome figure and dashing presence, so unlike anything she had ever seen before, had made a complete conquest of Namoune's heart.

But the enamored sovereign saw plainly enough that Seawalf's affections were all given to another.

While Amy lived she could never hope to either win or force him to consent to a union with herself.

Hence she had plotted the poor girl's destruction.

Her seeming complaisance, and her consent to the marriage between Seawalf and the white slave, covered a fiendish design, which she had matured after recovering her senses from Mako's blow.

She had quietly summoned to her an old sorcerer, long famous among her subjects for his skill and sagacity in the manufacture of poisons.

From him she had obtained a small flask containing a vegetable poison so powerful that a single drop of it would, within a few minutes, cause the death, amid infernal torments, of the victim who swallowed it.

This poison was intended for her hated rival in Seawalf's affections, and her fierce heart glowed hotly as she enjoyed in perspective the pleasure of feasting her eyes on poor Amy's dying agonies.

Once the girl was removed from her path she made no doubt but she could in time persuade or force Seawalf to become her husband.

At the hour appointed the two prisoners were summoned, and left the apartment in which they had been confined under escort of a retinue of slaves.

Their way led them to the banqueting-hall.

It was a large and rather lofty apartment, with floor, walls and ceiling of a curiously polished stone, resembling porphyry.

At regular intervals, placed so as to form a large oval, were ranged blocks of the same stone, serving instead of tables.

Each was covered with a mat made from the bark of the palm-tree, and before each on the floor a sort of rug of the same material, dyed in gaudy colors, was spread.

In the centre of the ellipse stood three of these large blocks, the centre one being somewhat larger than the others.

In front of it was a thick cushion, covered with cloth-of-gold.

These centre-pieces were intended for the use of Queen Namoune and her two special guests.

At one end of the room was a dais, which, when the two young people entered, the queen led them up to.

The place was empty, but three blows on a gong which hung in the wall summoned a swarm of attendants to Namoune's side.

Warriors and other prominent men of the tribe followed, until the hall was soon filled.

Namoune seated herself on an elaborately carved mass of ivory and gold on the dais.

Seawalf and Amy, acting on a sign from her, seated themselves at her feet.

Then calling an attendant, she bade him summon Famijousta.

The servitor vanished, to return almost immediately, leading one of the queen's figures our hero, even, in his varied experience, had ever seen.

Famijousta, who filled the office of private sorcerer or Fetich man to the queen, was a man of colossal height, but so gaunt and attenuated that he looked more like a skeleton than a human being.

His woolly hair, almost snow-white, covered his head and hung over his shoulders like a mop.

His eyes were deep-set, and glittered like those of a serpent, while his hands and feet were of enormous size and strength.

He wore a robe made of the skins of wild beasts, and about his neck and chest was a broad circlet, formed of the teeth of the enemies of Nimigi slain in battle.

The queen motioned him to approach, and muttered some instructions to him in an undertone.

She then directed Seawalf and Amy to rise and stand before her.

At her bidding they joined hands.

A sign from her brought the Fetich man forward, and, holding their joined hands in his, he muttered some words in the cabalistic language all of his class use in their incantations.

He then produced a stalk of the thorn-bush, which he broke in half, giving a piece to each.

After flourishing a small, curiously-carved stick over Amy's head, he handed it to our hero, with a wave to the former he gave a gourd of the Parelkusatus, or wild cucumber vine.

His last performance was to rub a little palm-oil on each of their foreheads.

Then he made a solemn reverence to the queen, and retired.

The crowd around at once set up a wild chant, and with the clashing of weapons and many barbaric gesticulations, the ceremony ended.

Such was the marriage rite of the people of Nimigi.

When it was over, Namoune gave the signal to sit, and every one settled to the serious business of the feast, which the queen had directed to be prepared.

She placed Seawalf at her right hand, and Amy on her left, at the centre tables.

Around the oval, on the outside, so that they faced her, the remaining guests took their places.

Everything that savage taste or fancy could suggest was heaped upon the stone blocks before them.

Huge golden dishes of game, fruits, strange vegetables and strange compounds, all served on platters of pure gold, in many cases studded with gems, abounded on all hands.

Flasks of palm-wine were supplied to every one, and the testivities were soon at their height.

While her own hand the queen filled the cups placed before Amy and Seawalf.

And with her sable countenance wreathed with smiles that made her look more hideous than ever, she watched eagerly for the moment when she might carry out her deadly purpose.

At length an opportunity offered, and the maddened woman quickly seized it.

Under pretense of filling the rudely made but costly golden goblet from which Amy was drinking, she managed to drop into it a sufficient quantity of the poison to effect her purpose.

The success of her wicked plan seemed certain.

Neither Seawalf nor his young bride had the least idea of the plot.

In their great happiness, indeed, they had even forgotten the suspicions which had lately oppressed them.

But there was one individual whom Namoune had left out of her reckoning.

That individual was Mako.

The monkey had remained in discreet retirement since his exploit that morning.

In point of fact, he had been hidden in the stall adjoining the temple, where Thunderbolt was stabled.

Becoming restless, he had finally made his way out, and as everybody seemed going to the palace, he went there too.

In the darkness and the crowd, he was not noticed, and so he gained admission to the banqueting hall.

There he was in his element.

He moved about among the attendants and the banqueters, doing all the mischief his inventive devility suggested.

Here a shrill cry from one of the attendants, and a loud clatter, would tell how he had contrived to upset an armful of dishes.

There a toaster would reach down for the flask of palm-wine he had set on the ground beside him and find it gone.

Another would be astonished at the apparition of a black paw reaching over his shoulder, snatching the choicest morsel from his plate and vanishing with it.

They looked, but saw no one.

Thanks to the throng of servants constantly moving to and fro, the agile Mako managed to vanish every time, enjoying his stolen sweets in some corner.

At last his movements brought him behind the queen's seat.

The latter was just preparing for the final move in the tragedy she intended to carry into effect.

Leaning over to Seawalf, she told him that she wished him and his new-made wife to drink with her to their future good fortune and happiness.

This speech, delivered in the figurative language of Nimigi, occupied several minutes in its delivery.

Mako had been watching.

Exactly what suspicion had taken possession of him, or whether it was the mere mischievous tendency natural to his mind, it would be difficult to say.

At any rate, while the queen, Seawalf and Amy were so busy that they did not notice him, he deftly shifted Namoune's goblet and set that of her intended victim in its place.

The poisoned wine stood before the would-be murderess, and as she finished her speech she took the goblet up.

She was excited, nervous for the success of her scheme, and did not notice the change.

"Are you ready?" she asked.

Both her guests responded in the affirmative.

For an instant she looked at Amy with eyes that blazed like a tiger's.

Then she said, or rather hissed:

"We drink to one another—health, long life and many happy days."

"Health, long life and many happy days," reiterated the two.

And all three drank.

Almost immediately a sharp spasm distorted Namoune's face.

"What is the matter?" asked Seawalf, alarmed.

"Nothing," was the gasping reply.

And it was scarcely uttered when the speaker fell back on the floor in violent convulsions.

Her cries and contortions were frightful to behold.

Screams, groans, shrieks and awful imprecations escaped from her thick lips, which were fringed with bloody foam.

Her eyes started from their sockets, her face was distorted till it was no longer human, and her body was convulsed by horrible spasms.

The only articulate words she uttered were:

"Poison! I am poisoned!"

Seawalf and Amy watched this awful scene, mute with terror.

The other banqueters were thrown into the wildest confusion.

Suddenly her cries ceased.

Her muscles contracted till her heels touched the back of her head.

Then a convulsive bound shot her several feet up in the air, and she fell back motionless!

The Queen of Nimigi had perished by the very plot she had planned for the destruction of another.

Her final fall was the signal for a wild rush toward her, and her subjects, crowding around, rent the air with their outcries.

"The queen poisoned!" exclaimed one.

"But how?"

"By whom?"

"By Jove!" suddenly exclaimed our hero, in English, "I see it all."

"See what?" asked Amy.

"The plot. She intended to poison you, and, by some accident, the cups were changed. That accounts for her extraordinary amiability."

"My God!" gasped Amy. "It must be so."

This colloquy, in a language they could not understand, attracted the attention of the assembled Nimigians.

"What is it the white dog is saying?" asked one of them.

"He is plotting another murder!" replied another.

"Yes! yes!" shouted a number of voices. "It is he who murdered our queen!"

"He and the white slave. Who else?"

"Let us kill them, then!" suggested a truculent savage, with red eyes and bandy legs. "Blood for blood!"

This proposition was received with universal acclamation.

A hoarse roar swelled up on every side into the furious chorus:

"Kill them! Kill them! Kill them!"

And a mad rush was made for the two white people.

Seawalf had just time to snatch up a heavy golden dish, when one man seized him.

He brained him with a single blow, but in the movement he was compelled to release his hold on Amy, and one of the brutes seized her and commenced to drag her off.

Her wild shrieks for help pierced the tempest of savage cries, and, with a bound, our hero gained her side.

A single blow of the heavy dish stretched her captor dead with a shattered skull.

The others drew back for a minute, and clutching his bride to his heart, Seawalf faced a mob whom rage seemed to have turned to devils.

"Our time is come," he whispered into Amy's ear. "Be brave, if you can."

At this moment, and when the Nimigians were about to make a final rush, there sounded from the exterior of the palace a strange, low murmur, like the rush of distant water.

The Nimigians, forgetting for a brief space their bloody purpose against our hero and heroine, looked at one another inquiringly.

To the first sound was now added another, like the loud, hoarse blast of a distant trumpet.

At this sound Mako, who had been trying to struggle through the crowd to his master's side, jumped into a high window and uttered a shrill scream of joy.

The monkey's voice recalled the Nimigians to themselves.

One party made a rush for the ape, while the other pressed forward at our hero.

He left himself being forced back and overwhelmed by the crowd, when suddenly the cries outside swelled into the roar of many voices, and the hoarse trumpeting assumed shape of a definite character.

It was the trumpeting of an infuriated elephant.

And in a second more that elephant, in the shape of Thunderbolt, dashed in through the door.

Following him and jumping in at all the windows, came a horde of dwarfs, who swarmed on all sides, as the white ants swarm around Mount Baginze.

They were the pygmies, and high over them all towered the stalwart form of Dick Batters.

No pen could describe the carnage that ensued.

When it ended the banqueting-hall was a mere shamble, choked with dead and afloat with blood.

The living Nimigians had fled; the living pygmies, mad with blood and battle, pursued them.

When the sun rose on Nimigi, it shone over a conquered city.

Thanks to the efforts of Seawalf and Dick, such of the inhabitants as had offered no resistance were saved from massacre.

The living warriors who had surrendered were bound to huge stones and rolled over the edge of the mountain.

The dead were piled on a vast funeral pyre in the amphitheatre, and burned to ashes, which were scattered to the winds.

The triumph of victory to our hero was, however, marked by sorrow.

Amy had received a wound in the last attack made on them by the Nimigians, and was in a most critical condition. For weeks she hovered between life and death, and it was months more before she could be removed.

Consequently, Seawalf found his projected return home indefinitely delayed.

Dick consented to remain and keep him company.

A few days passed after the battle in quiet, the time being chiefly occupied in restoring order to the conquered city.

Dick had sent most of the pygmies whom he had summoned from Bakenje, to assist in the rescue of our hero, back, only keeping a strong enough force to retain the city in subjection.

The question now rose as to what to do next.

They had a big town on their hands, and no idea what to do with it.

The question was answered by the appearance at the palace one afternoon of a party of the Nimigians.

Their leader, in an address as long as his arm, besought our hero to become their king.

The old race of hereditary rulers was extinct, and they considered the great white warrior as marked out by the gods to succeed to the throne.

After some reflection, Seawalf consented.

His rule, in which he was assisted by Dick Batters, was a wise one, and the country became very prosperous.

Thunderbolt spent his time for a year eating and sleeping, occasionally taking part in some State ceremonial, with his master on his back.

He was worshiped as a great Fetich, and the people gave him so much to eat that one day he took a fit of indigestion and died.

Mako, whom good living had also made fat, mourned with his master over his old friend.

The elephant was buried in the great public square of Nimigi, and every evening Mako could be seen sitting on the porphyry tomb that covered him, with a bottle of palm-wine beside him.

The natives said he went there to communicate with the spirit of the great Fetich.

His master asserted that he communed with bottled spirits, not buried ones—that, in short, he went there to get drunk in peace.

Be that as it may, he grew more and more dissipated until Seawalf was compelled to stop his supplies of liquor, when he reformed.

At the end of two years our hero gathered together a vast treasure which he had collected, and, with Amy, Dick and Mako, bade a last adieu to his sorrowing subjects, made his way to the coast and thence to America.

Rich and happy, he settled down, still a young man, to enjoy the fruits of his adventurous years, and at last accounts was alive and well.

Dick Batters married Jabe Junk's daughter, and became one of the most beautiful household, having, thanks to the gold provided by the white ants of Mount Baginze, become independent of the circus business.

He passes for a retired sea-captain who was captured by South Island cannibals and ran a pub, and, and most romantic tales are told of him.

If any readers of the BOYS' AND GIRLS' WEEKLY have been to Southport lately, they may perhaps have seen a gray-headed old sailor and a huge monkey, dressed in a fisherman's rig, who continually wander the beaches and fish in the harbor in company.

The two worthies in question are the sagacious and valorous Mako and Jabe Junk.

However, as the final years of Seawalf's reign at Nimigi and his return to his native land were fraught with many episodes quite as strange and adventurous as those which marked the portion of his career we have now brought to a close, the chronicler may yet find an opportunity to give them to the world. To the present portion of the story he writes

THE END.

WILD ROSE AND VIOLET;

Or,

Fun at Mrs. Hawk's.

CHAPTER XII.

AN ADVENTURE.

VIOLET LEIGH, as soon as the deputation had departed on its mission, hurried to the schoolroom window to comfort the friend she loved with a smile of sympathy, and an account of the efforts making in her behalf.

But the girls were so long absent that the patience of Rose Royston was exhausted, and she began seriously to contemplate anticipating any reversal of her sentence by letting herself out.

The first thing she did was to open the window, which she effected by standing on a high stool; then, grasping the iron rails, she pulled herself up on to the window-sill and smiled at her friend.

"Oh," exclaimed Violet, apprehensively, "you'll never be able to climb over those sharp points."

"I'm not going to try, dear," returned Rose, laughing; "but it's hard if I can't contrive to squeeze myself between the bars."

"Oh, don't, darling. You'll hurt yourself."

"Not I, dear. Don't be afraid on my account. Remember we are both Jolly Girls, and Jolly Girls must be brave."

With these inspiring words Rose commenced her task.

The bars were a considerable distance apart from each other, but still it required a considerable amount of compression before she could reduce herself to the necessary state of fatness to enable her to pass between them; but she persevered with an energy only known to captives yearning for freedom.

Violet looked on in a species of trembling fascination.

She expected nothing less than to see her friend wedged inextricably between the iron bars, and so to perish miserably.

But Rose relieved her of her fears by suddenly exclaiming:

"It's all right; I'm out."

And so she was. With flushed cheeks, and breathless with her exertion, she stood on the exterior window-sill, looking down triumphantly on her companion.

"But how'd I done that well?" she said, with a joyous laugh.

"Beautifully!" exclaimed Violet. "Can't you get down?"

"Oh, yes."

Fortunately, the window being round the angle of the building, was out of sight of Miss Drudger and the rest of the pupils, and Rose was enabled to drop to the ground without being observed.

"Free! free!" she cried, exultingly, as her feet touched the gravel; "and now for a ramble in the grounds. Will you come?"

"Anywhere with you," was Violet's reply.

The Meditation House estate was, as has been stated, of considerable extent, and afforded opportunities for a long ramble—the boundaries of the playground once passed—without any fear of being discovered.

The gate that led to the adjoining meadow was at at the further extremity of the playground, and to reach this without attracting observation was a difficulty that seemed likely to frustrate their plans entirely.

But after a little inspection, the quick eyes of Rose Royston detected what seemed to her a flaw in the wooden palings that surrounded the space devoted to the ordinary purposes of recreation.

With hasty steps she approached the spot, followed by her companion.

The paling was loose, and by pressing against it it yielded sufficiently to allow the fair adventurers to squeeze through, and then very kindly returned to its place.

"Hurrah!" cried Rose, as soon as they were on the other side; "now we are free, indeed! Give me a kiss, darling."

The two friends hugged each other warmly for an instant, and then Rose exclaimed, in an exhilarated tone:

"Now, then, off we go, and let Mrs. Hawk and the other Hawks catch us if they can."

Exulting in the sense of freedom, our "Wild Rose" and "Violet," so different in their physical attributes, so unlike in temperament, and yet so united by the strong affection they had conceived for each other, hurried along, shielded by the wooden barriers that flanked the playground, till they reached the hedge of the field in which they were.

"Stoop down, now," said Rose, "and come along."

Bending themselves toward the ground, they scudded along like a couple of wild hares under shadow of the hedge, until they reached the gate.

Through this they passed, and hurried forward without pause till they reached a small plantation, into which they plunged, feeling that they were now in safety, and could walk upright, and laugh, talk, or sing, as they liked, to their hearts' content.

"Isn't this delightful?" cried Violet, enthusiastically.

"Isn't it jolly?" exclaimed Rose, with equal warmth. "Wouldn't it be nice to spend a whole day here, and bring our dinners with us?"

"Oh, wouldn't it, indeed!" eagerly assented Violet.

"I should like some dinner now if I could get it," continued Rose, rather ruefully; "I'm dreadfully hungry. That abominable semi-diet doesn't suit me at all."

The young girls, having traversed the plantation, emerged into an open space, where lay outstretched before them the ornamented piece of water, looking like a small lake with its boats and swans, and backed by a woody grove of magnificent trees.

As the two girls approached the lake, Rose said:

"Shall we have a sail?"

"I should like it," returned Violet, "but I'm afraid that some one might see us from the house."

Rose Royston turned round to look in the distance at the scholastic mansion.

It seemed a good way off; but it was just possible that two solitary figures in a boat upon the lake might attract attention.

So she said:

"We won't go in the boat to-day, then; but we'll get the whole club to come with us some afternoon, and then we'll have a fine sail, and bring some bread for the swans."

Leaving the lake, they advanced towards the grove, and entered its shadowy precincts; and as they penetrated further and further into its recesses Rose could not restrain her admiration. She was in a congenial element; she felt at home once more.

"Oh, this is a delightful place!" she cried, the tears coming into her eyes with rapture; "this is like dear old Shadow Wood. I could fancy I was there now."

Together she and Violet rambled along, and at length, before they were aware of it, they had reached the boundary wall, which, being covered with ivy, was not very perceptible through the trees.

The ground in front of the wall ascended in a gradual slope, forming a grassy hill, so that any one ascending the acclivity could, when they had arrived at the summit, easily look over into the lane beneath.

Of course, the first thing the young girls did on perceiving the mound was to run a race to see which could first reach the top.

The top being gained, the next thing they did was to look over.

The lane that skirted the inclosure was solitude itself. Trees, bushes, and the birds that inhabited them were the only things visible.

"Isn't it quiet?" Violet remarked.

"Very," returned Rose, abstractedly. She was looking down into the shady lane, as though she had some act in contemplation.

"The wall is very high," said Violet.

"Yes-s," answered her companion, in the same abstracted tone, and then added, "I wonder whether there are any shops about here?"

"I don't know, I'm sure," replied Violet. "Why?"

"Why, if there were, I should like to go and buy some cakes, or something; I'm regularly starving."

"Poor dear!" exclaimed her friend, in tones of strong sympathy; "what a shame to keep you without your dinner! You must be hungry; I'm hungry myself, for I couldn't eat that dreadful boiled mutton."

She shuddered vividly.

"If I were to drop down into the lane," said Rose, "I wonder whether I could get up again by the ivy?"

"Oh, but you could never drop all that distance!" cried Violet, aghast at the daring idea.

"Couldn't I?" returned the latter, laughing; "I only wish there was a plum-cake in the pathway underneath, and if I couldn't. I've half a mind to chance it. Of course, I don't expect you to come, darling; you would wait for me here, wouldn't you?"

"Oh, yes."

"That I will. I've got some money, and there must be some shops where they sell something nice somewhere about! Here goes!"

Having uttered these exclamations, Rose was about to commence her descent when footsteps in the lane arrested her attention.

She paused and listened, and presently a little old woman, carrying an open wicker-basket on her arm, came in sight.

She walked along sturdily, looking neither to the right nor left, only straight forward.

"Ah!" said Rose, "a chance not to be missed, and as she was passing, Rose called to her:

"Stop, if you please!"

The dame looked up and down and round and round, and every way but the right.

"Eh, eh!" she muttered, at length; "who was it as said stop?"

"I did," answered Rose; "I'm up here on the top of the wall."

"So you be, surely," exclaimed the old woman, as she peered up and encountered the eager face that looked down upon her; "and what do you want wi' me, my dear?"

"I wish to know if you sell anything good to eat?" Rose answered.

The dame chuckled as she removed the clean cloth from her basket, and revealed a delicious assortment of tarts and cakes.

"Oh, how nice!" cried the hungry girls, simultaneously.

"They are nice, too," asserted the old woman. "I can warrant 'em, and all fresh baked to-day."

"We'll buy some," said Rose, "if you'll sell them."

"Ah, sure I will, child," returned the dame. "How many do you want?"

"Well, we'll have a half a dollar's worth," Rose replied, after a little consideration. And having taken that sum from her purse, she dropped it into the basket, and the coin stuck in a raspberry tart.

It then became a question how the eatables, after being paid for, were to be transferred to the top of the wall.

"I'll put 'em in a bag," said the old woman, and then we'll see."

Whilst the pastry was being packed in this manner Rose gathered some long grass and tied the stalks together, and by means of this fragile line the tarts were safely landed on the top of the wall.

"Thank you!" cried the hungry young ladies.

"And do you kindly, my dears, and good-day to 'ee both," returned the old woman, as she trotted off.

Her parting salutation was unheard. Rose and Violet were already seated on the grass, occupied with the tarts, which fully merited the dame's encomiums.

Having allayed their hunger, they continued their stroll, and presently came in sight of a bubbling spring.

"Oh, this is the country all over!" exclaimed Rose, in an ecstasy, as she bent down to drink. "Isn't it delicious?" she continued, after slaking her thirst, as she shook her luxuriant locks, in which the water hung like diamonds.

Violet quite agreed with her that it was.

The spring was near the boundary-wall, and seemed to well up from beneath its foundations, and to impart its moisture to the clustering ivy that covered it.

They seated themselves on the turf, and were gradually lulled into a dreamy reverie.

Suddenly the silence was broken by a strange voice, that poured forth in a peculiarly nasal tone, the following effusion:

"I send a letter to my loaf,
She send me no loaf back.
Helas! my 'eart ees like my boots,
Ver much all ovare crack.

"Oh, coam, my loaf, your lovair vait,
Alone beneath ze wall;
'E should climb ope upon ze top,
Onlee to tear to fall.

"Look down upon ze *pauvre Antoine*,
'Oo 'ave 'is monnee spent;
An' drop a tear an' soam small coix
To 'elp 'im pay 'is rent.

I send for you, my dearest loaf,
A beggaer and a bulle';
If you by send me sweet reply,
Despair shall turn me silly.
Pity ze poor exile!"

The voice ceased, and the listeners looked in each other's face.

"Who is that?" whispered Violet.

"I think it is that French count who wrote the pink love-letter," answered Rose.

"Oh, dear, he must be under the wall," said Violet; "we'd better run away, hadn't we?"

"Why should we run away?" remarked Rose; "he can't climb up. I should like to peep at him."

"Oh, don't, dear!" entreated Violet; "he might shoot you—or—something."

"I'm not afraid," Rose replied; "and I want to see what he's like."

Regardless of her friend's dread, she was about to rise and clamber up the ivy for the purpose of looking at the distressed exile, when something flew over the wall and fell at her feet.

It was a bouquet, to which was attached an object which they had been especially charged to hold in abhorrence—a pink envelope, doubtless scented with horrid musk.

CHAPTER XIII.

EXILE.

THEY sat gazing at the nosegay for several moments, when Rose said:

"There doesn't seem any harm in it; I may as well pick it up."

She was about to rise for that purpose, when Violet held her back.

"Oh, don't, dear! don't touch the dreadful thing—pray don't!" she exclaimed, in accents of terror.

"Why not?" Rose asked, with a laugh.

"I—I feel afraid of it. It—it might go off!"

Rose laughed again at her friend's fears.

"Why, you little, timid darling," she said, "what danger can there be in a bunch of flowers and a note?"

"How do you know there may not be a snake in it that would spring out and bite you the moment you take hold of it? Mrs. Hawk said there might be."

"Oh, never mind what Mrs. Hawk said," returned Rose; "I have seen plenty of snakes in the woods at Grey Hollow, and caught them, too, and they never did me any harm. I'm not afraid of it, and so I shall pick up the nosegay."

Violet suffered herself to be led, but with evident trepidation.

"There, darling!" exclaimed Rose, after giving the bouquet a slight touch with her foot, and causing it to roll over; "you see, there are no snakes as yet."

She kicked it lightly a second time, but still nothing in the shape of a snake appeared.

"Are you satisfied now, dear?" asked Rose.

"I—I confess I don't see any danger at present," Violet answered; "but——"

"There is no danger," exclaimed Rose, boldly, "and even if there were, as a member of the Jolly Girls I wouldn't run away from it."

So saying, she picked up the questionable treasure.

Rose examined the nosegay minutely.

It was a very faded, dilapidated affair altogether, and I suggested strongly a bouquet which, having perfumed the atmosphere of some box at the opera, had been picked up by some wanderer (the Count Exile, perchance).

"Well, I can't say much for the flowers," said Rose, as she finished her scrutiny, "if ever I had a sweetheart, and he sent me such a shabby nosegay as this, I think I should throw it back again over the wall directly."

"Ah, but you know, darling, the poor count has no money; he said so in his letter. Being driven away from his home and friends, of course he couldn't afford to buy very expensive bouquets," suggested Violet, sympathizingly.

"Perhaps not," admitted Rose. "But see," she added, "here is a pink note, and—phew!—how dreadfully it smells of musk!"

"Mrs. Hawk refused me a sight of the first one, so I shall most decidedly read this while I have the chance."

"Who is it addressed to?" asked Violet.

"Ze—losfliest—of ze—mose—loafly," answered Rose, as she deciphered the direction with some difficulty; "by which the writer means, I suppose, 'the loveliest of the most lovely.' Well, that is not bad."

"For I," echoed Violet.

"It's anybody, or nobody," laughed Rose, as she tore open the envelope.

The young girls looked eagerly at the contents.

The writing was very cramped, uneven and illspelt, and Violet at once recognized the hand as identical with that of the first epistle.

"Now let's see what he says," said Rose, as she began to read aloud:

"LOAFLIEST OF ZE MOSE LOAFLY.—I rite vonce to you yesterday before to-day, an' trow se letsair ovare ze vall. I coam ze day aftair to-morrer, an' *helas!* I fin' no ansair. I rite again an' trow 'im again ovare ze vall, an' I vait. Oh, I am mosh in despair—se vords are dark—no monnee—no rent now for tree week—my landaee treaten me, ze baker frous, ze man wiz ze milk-can refuse to supply me, all my *tabac* ees gorn, ze soul of my boot come avay from ze uppare leanzer, my 'eart ees break an' yet my loaf do not coam to me. *Helas!* vhere shall I go? vot shall I do till my remittance arrive from France? I vait for a reply. Vill my loaf accept als omble bouquet from er unappy

"ANTOINE EXILE."

"What do you think of this?" asked Rose, as she finished.

"I scarcely know what to think," Violet replied. "The poor fellow seems to be in great distress."

"He doesn't appear to be very much like a count. What a dreadful scrawl he writes," remarked Rose.

"Do counts always write well?" inquired Violet.

"I don't know, I'm sure. I never saw a count in my life."

There was a great rustling amongst the ivy at this juncture, and a voice was heard to exclaim:

"You shall see vun now."

The next moment a particularly shabby-looking individual made his appearance on the top of the wall.

He had evidently climbed up from the lane, and now sat with his legs dangling, looking down upon the young ladies.

"Ah, young ladies," he exclaimed, "you are surprised to see me, I know; *pardonnez*, 'ear me. Listen to my tale of woe."

The sound of the intruder's voice broke the charm that bound our young heroines.

"Oh, let us run away, Rose, dear," whispered Violet.

The shabby man sought to dispel apprehension by speaking in the most mellifluous tones.

"Be not afraid, *mes belles demoiselles*," he cried; "as poor exile shall not 'arm you—oh, no!"

There was so much pathos in the foreign accent and plaintive tone of the speaker that his listeners felt there was more room for pity than fear.

His name, too, had arrested their attention, and after a moment Rose said to him:

"If you please, sir, are you the unknown count that was obliged to run away from home in such a hurry?"

The person addressed smiled an anguished smile and shrugged his shoulders till his head seemed to be descending into his body, as he replied:

"*Helas!* yes; I am ze unknown count. Oh, yes!"

"You wrote this letter, then?" continued Rose.

"Yes, I write 'em."

"And the other, also?"

"Yes; and ze ozare also."

"And is your name Exile?"

"Yes," nodded the unfortunate, speaking more vehemently; "my name is Exile. You pitiee me? Oh, yes, I can see zat you pitee me. I shall coam down an' speak to you."

Without any further intimation, the count dropped himself from his perch, and came crashing down through the ivy in showers of dust and earwigs.

Violet was quite aghast at being so near the mysterious being, but Rose stood her ground boldly, and scrutinized the trespasser in her own peculiar way.

He was below the middle height, corpulent in person, and high-shouldered.

His dress was particularly seedy. His frock coat was buttoned over his chest, whilst the small portion of linen visible was of a most very questionable color, and seemed to indicate either very limited means or a great want of personal cleanliness on the part of the exile, this last impression receiving additional strength from the grimy incrustrations visible at the extremities of his fingers.

Rose Royston found it difficult to detect any traits that indicated noble blood or illustrious ancestry in the shabby individual before her.

Still there was a dash of something about him that savored of the foreign refugee, if only in the deferential manner in which he placed his hand upon his heart and bowed to the young ladies.

"Do not be alarmed, *ma belles*," he exclaimed, gallantly; "a *chevalier Français* nevair insult grace an' beauty soch as yours."

Violet was thinking what an extremely civil person he was, when her companion said, somewhat abruptly, to the courteous exile:

"I don't know whether you're aware of it, but you're trespassing."

The chevalier of France seemed for a moment slightly taken aback, but he laughed it off, as he replied:

"Ah, yes, yes; I trespass. I know zat, but 'oo can 'elp to trespass when he seek to find ze lonely woman 'e adores?"

"I'm sure I don't know what Mrs. Hawk would say if she were to see you," Rose exclaimed.

"Ha, ha, Meestress—Madame 'Awk," repeated the count, with marked emphasis. "And pray, *ma chère*, 'oo is she?"

"The mistress of the school," returned Rose.

"What, *ze grande*, ogliee ole fright vis——"

"Yes, with the crimson bonnet and the blue feather."

"Ah, yes, yes; an' ze big nose," exclaimed the count.

His listeners could not help smiling.

The smile seemed to inspire the forlorn foreigner, for he grinned in return, as he said:

"Meestress 'Awk shall not see me; an' if she did, could I not escape zere?"

He pointed to the wall.

"But what do you want, count?" asked Rose.

"I want my loaf," he exclaimed, placing both hands on his breast, and turning up his round, dark eyes with tremendous sentimentality.

"Perhaps he's hungry, poor fellow," whispered Violet; "offer him a tart."

Rose held out the paper bag to him immediately.

"I am sorry I haven't got a loaf to offer you," she said, "but you're very welcome to these, if you like to have them."

The count saw at once that he was misunderstood. But his noble nature took no offense. In proof of which he took the bag with much alacrity.

"Ha, ha!" he cried, with a smile, as he looked inside it; "ze littel tart. I like ze littel tart, c'est bon. You wish me to eat? Veree good; I shall eat."

And without further comment the amiable refugee commenced upon "ze littel tarts," and never stopped until he had entirely consumed them, then he explained to Rose:

"Vhen I say I vant my loaf, I do not mean ze loaf that I buy at ze baikair, I mean *ze belle ange avec les cheveux noirs et les yeux gris*."

"Who's that?" inquired Rose, of her friend, in a side-speech.

"Some one with black hair and green eyes, I think," whispered Violet, in return.

"It must be the eldest Miss Hawk!" exclaimed Rose, exultingly, but in a low tone; "*her eyes are green*."

She turned toward the Frenchman, and said:

"Don't you know the name of the—I mean of your—a—loaf?"

"*Helas!* no!" cried the banished one; "zat is vhat I vant to discovare. You shall tell me 'er name, an' save me from despair!"

The count here grew so excited, and clasped his hands with such a sudden clap, that he quite made Violet jump, and put all the birds in the vicinity to immediate flight.

"Tell me—oh, tell me," he repeated, wildly, "ze name of my loaf!"

"Well, I'm not quite certain," returned Rose, feeling inclined to roar with laughter; "there are so many young ladies here. But I think, from your description, you must mean the beautiful Priscilla."

"Ah, yes, yes! ze beauteous Prescecia!" echoed the count, in a species of frantic rapture; "it moss be 'er, *sans doute*. I shall know now 'ow to address my lettairs. Ze beautiful Prescecia, I am satisfied."

"And now, then, count, perhaps you'll oblige us by going," said Rose, who fancied she heard voices in the distance.

"You vant to get rid of me—is it so?" he said.

"Yes, we do; you've staid quite long enough," was Rose's blunt reply.

"Veree good, sen, I shall go. But you shall tell ze beauteous Prescecia 'ow I adore 'er!" said the refugee.

"Oh! yes, yes; we'll tell her—that is, if you go at once."

At this moment a ringing laugh was borne to the spot.

"Ha, ha! it ees my loaf zat I 'ear!" exclaimed the count, lingering.

"No—no, it isn't," returned Rose, quickly; "she's

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in the house. Pray go! If you don't I won't give her your message."

The illustrious exile seemed half inclined to remain, but this last threat took its effect, and clambering hurriedly up the ivy, he disappeared just before the goddess of his idolatry, Constance Grey—for it was she who had made such an impression upon the heart of the banished chevalier—appeared, followed by the rest of the Jolly Girls.

CHAPTER XIV.

ONCE AGAIN.

"Oh, here they are!—here they are! Bravo!" they cried, as they came running forward.

"Well, you are the jolliest of Jolly Girls!" exclaimed Constance, as she reached the spot and hugged Rose warmly.

"That you are!" added Milly Westlake; "you're a perfect example to all of us."

"Do tell us how you got out of that dusty, musty old schoolroom!" cried Charlotte Merry. "You didn't get up the chimney, now, did you?"

"No," replied Rose; "do I look black, then, as if I had been amongst the soot?"

"Oh, no," answered all.

And then Constance Grey, fixing her eyes upon her, exclaimed:

"On the contrary, instead of looking black, you look rather white. And so do you," she added to Violet; "you both look white; what's the matter with you? What have you been up to, eh?"

"Nothing," exclaimed Rose and Violet.

"Well," remarked Milly, "judging by your looks, I should say it was something. But there, never mind; I suppose you're rather scared at the prospect of Mrs. Penelope Hawk's indignation, ain't you?"

"Not I," returned Rose; "I never thought about it. I'm not afraid of her."

"I don't believe you are," said Charlotte Merry; "and there's one comfort, that in your case there's no occasion for fear, for we'd got your reprieve from captivity; only when we went to unbolt your prison-doors we found you had bolted beforehand."

There was a general laugh at this little witticism, and then Constance Grey said:

"And now let Miss Royston tell us how she got out of the schoolroom, and then we'll tell her our story."

Rose, therefore, without delay, recounted her wonderful escape from prison, and her further emancipations from the confines of the playground through the medium of the loosened paling, together with the subsequent incident of the old tart woman.

At this point she stopped.

The Jolly Girls having listened with as much interest as could be expected from three young ladies who were already burdened with a sweet secret they longed to get rid of, Milly Westlake said:

"And now, Rose dear, having heard all about your doings, which we highly applaud, it is our turn to tell you what we have found out. Oh, what do you think?"

"What?" inquired Rose and Violet together.

"Why," continued Milly, "Priscilla and Prudence Hawk are both dying with curiosity to know who this dear mysterious count is."

"Are they, though?" exclaimed Rose, in earnest surprise.

"Oh, yes; there's no doubt about it," affirmed Constance Grey; "for Priscilla made Milly promise if she found any more pink notes that she would bring them to her first, and that she would hand them over to her mamma."

"Of course we know what that means," laughed Charlotte Merry.

"I suppose," said Rose, echoing the laugh, "it means that she would never show them to her mamma at all."

"Precisely," ejaculated the rest.

"Of course," continued Constance, "you know we're all in a dreadful state of anxiety to learn more about this unfortunate nobleman."

"Are you, though, really?" inquired Rose.

"Yes, indeed we are, really," returned everybody; "ain't you?"

"Not particularly."

"What!" cried the whole party, almost in consternation; "do you really mean to say that you are not as anxious as any of us?"

"Well, to tell the truth," Rose replied, "I'm not anxious at all."

"Nor I, either, in the least," added Violet.

"You quite surprise us," exclaimed the Jolly Girls, in a tone of great disappointment.

"Why," continued Constance Grey, looking perfectly radiant with excitement, "we're all of us in a fever of wonderment as to whom this unknown stranger is, and for you two girls to tell us coolly that you're not anxious is quite incomprehensible."

Her friends quite agreed with her.

"I declare," she went on, "I'd give anything if I could find another pink note, or anything that would unravel the mystery."

"How much would you give, dear?" asked Rose.

"All I'm worth," was the quick but extravagant reply.

"Suppose you could have it for nothing, what then?" inquired Rose.

Her companions looked eagerly in the face of the speaker at these words.

Then Constance Grey exclaimed suddenly, as a suspicion of the truth flashed across her:

"You've found another love-letter; I know you have; haven't you, now?"

"Well, then, I have," returned Rose, her bright eyes flashing, and her brown eyes sparkling with the pleasure she felt in being able at last to gratify her friends.

"Hurra, hurra!" shouted the Jolly Girls, in the intensity of their delight; "you are a regular heroine, that you are!"

"You sly little puss you!" laughed Constance. "No wonder you were not anxious when you had the dear *billet-doux* all the time in your possession."

"There was not only a *billet-doux*," said Violet, "but a bonquet."

"A bonquet?—how delightful! The dear count understands the language of flowers," cried the girls, in a species of ecstasy. "But where are they? Let us see them; quick, quick!"

TALKS WITH BOYS ABOUT FOREIGN LANDS.—MAP OF ZULULAND, SOUTH AFRICA.

Rose, in her eagerness to expedite the departure of the noble exile, had dropped both these precious treasures.

The bouquet had rolled some yards away on the green turf, and the breeze had carried the pink effusion a little further still, and Rose had first to recover the prizes before she could exhibit them.

This was speedily accomplished, and both letter and nosegay were placed before the eager eyes of the spectators. The *billet-doux* was, of course, the principal object of attention.

Constance Grey read it aloud, and her companions, having eagerly drank in every syllable, read it again, each for herself.

How the tender hearts melted at the plaintive appeal of the forlorn exile!

"Is it not dreadfully affecting?" asked Constance, sentimentally.

"Pitiful, most pitiful," exclaimed Milly Westlake.

"Painfully pathetic," murmured Charlotte Merry, her fair, round face looking quite elongated in its sudden seriousness.

Rose and Violet felt strongly inclined to spoil all the sentiment by laughing heartily, but they restrained themselves, and the former said:

"Do you really think the letter so very affecting?"

"Oh, I think it's excruciatingly touching," replied Constance; "don't you?"

Rose, having been blest with a sight of the illustrious but seedy writer, could not conscientiously admit its pathos, and she therefore answered, honestly:

"I can't say that it touches me much; but, then, perhaps, I'm no judge of love-letters."

"Oh, it's beautiful!" continued the sentimental Constance; "what a mournful tenderness breathes in every line!"

"It's a shocking scrawl for a count, though, isn't it?" remarked Rose.

"The poor fellow's hand shook, perhaps," remarked Charlotte Merry.

"It would naturally," joined in Milly.

"But the dreadful spelling!" Rose interposed.

"How could he be expected to spell correctly in the state of mental anguish he was enduring when he indited his sad epistle?" exclaimed Constance, indignantly. "Alas, unhappy Antoine! what a wretched state he must be in!"

"Fearful!" assented her sympathizing friends.

"Fancy a count—a peer of France—prevented from receiving his remittances from his banker, going about penniless, and with no soles to his boots. It's quite shocking to contemplate!"

"I vote we make a subscription for him," said Milly Westlake; "shall we?"

"Oh, certainly," exclaimed the rest.

"Not that it's much use," muttered Charlotte Merry, "since we know not where to find him. Oh, would that we could see him! He must be handsome!"

"Oh, yes," exclaimed Constance, in an absorbed tone of quiet rapture; "I can fancy I see him now, with his pale, spiritual features, and his dark, speaking eyes, as he sits in his solitary back attic, his tall and noble form bowed down with despair—his graceful head supported by delicate white hands, tipped with filbert-nails."

This was too much for the gravity of Rose and Violet, who, burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter.

The sentimental speaker was terribly indignant, as were also her friends, Milly and Charlotte, at this unseemly mirth.

"Have I said anything so very ridiculous?" she demanded, in a tone of hauteur.

"Don't be angry, dear Miss Grey," exclaimed Rose, grasping the hand of the offended beauty, "but upon my word I couldn't help laughing."

"No more could I," added Violet, apologetically; "but I'm very sorry."

WILD ROSE AND VIOLET.—"'BE NOT AFRAID, MES BELLES DEMOISELLES,' HE CRIED; 'ZE POOR EXILE SHALL NOT 'ARM YOU—OH, NO!'"—SEE PAGE 91.

"And pray, what were you laughing at?"

"Your description, dear," responded Rose, evincing a strong tendency to laugh again.

This seemed to make matters worse, and Constance asked, grandly:

"And what was there to excite your mirth in that?"

"Nothing, dear, but one thing; and that was that it was so much like the truth," Rose replied, bursting out again, in spite of herself.

"How do you know that?"

"Guess."

There was a momentary pause, and then with one accord, the young ladies exclaimed, eagerly:

"You've seen the count?"

"Yes, I have. We have both seen him!" returned Rose.

This explanation seemed to produce an entire revolution in the minds of the young ladies.

All angry feelings were set aside at once.

"What was he like?" asked one.

"Was he tall or short?" inquired another.

"Stout or thin?" questioned a third.

"Dark or fair?"

"Had he long or short hair?"

"Was it straight or curly?"

"What color were his eyes?"

"What sort of a nose?"

"Did he wear a mustache?"

"Had he any whiskers?"

"How was he dressed? Pray, pray tell us all about him!"

As it was impossible to answer all these questions in order at once, Rose summed up her reply by saying:

"The count was the shortest, fattest, funniest, shabbiest little man, with the dirtiest nails and the yellowest shirt-cuffs she had ever seen in her life."

This description was by no means satisfactory to the young ladies, and it seemed to cut up their sentimental aspirations at the very root.

A shabby, carework exile, the girls might have endured, but a short, fat, *funny* little man, with dirty nails and questionable linen, struck the death-knell of all romance.

However, they still asked questions.

"Whence did he come, and where did he go?" inquired Constance Grey.

"He came over the wall and went back the same way," Rose explained, pointing to the spot where the exile had climbed up.

"And whom did he want?" continued Constance.

"From what I could make out, he wanted the elder Miss Hawk."

"What!" exclaimed the Jolly Girls, with a burst of indignation; "Priscilla Hawk, that old-maidish poll-parrot! What horrible taste!"

"Are you quite sure you are not mistaken?" urged Milly Westlake.

"I think not. He spoke of a lovely angel with dark hair and *green* eyes."

"Green eyes!" reiterated Constance; "oh! you must surely have misunderstood him; gray eyes, more likely."

The young lady opened her own beautiful orbs very expressively as she spoke.

"It might have been so," admitted Rose; "but I fancied he said green."

"So did I," joined in Violet.

"I'm almost certain the poor wretch meant me, after all," murmured Constance, half to herself.

Suddenly, Milly Westlake said, inquiringly, to Rose:

"You say he went over the wall?"

"Yes; just before you joined us," she and Violet replied together.

"It's not at all unlikely, then, that he might be still in the lane?" exclaimed the rest. "Suppose we look?"

The young ladies made a rush toward the wall, but alas! when they reached it, it was much too high to admit of their looking over without a ladder.

"How dreadfully vexatious!" they exclaimed.

And then, the situation beginning to strike Constance Grey as somewhat comical, she began to rhapsodise:

"Oh, Antoine! Antoine, my cherished love, why hast thou flown away over the wall, and left me to pine in solitary loneliness? Oh, hear my voice, most charming count, and answer me! Antoine, *mon cher*, Antoine!"

Constance extended her arms after the fashion of appealing heroines, when suddenly—and most unexpectedly—the solicited reply came floating upward from the lane:

"Your *cher* Antoine 'ear an' answare you."

The speaker then proceeded still further to express his feelings in the following popular effusion:

"Meet me vonce again;
Meet me vonce ags—a
—ain.
Oh, lost ees va—a—a—kin;
Shall 'e vake in va—ain—
Shall 'e vake in vain?"

Before the listeners had time to express any opinion of this performance, a hat became distinctly visible as it rose slowly from behind the wall.

"Oh, good gracious! he is coming back again!" they cried, excitedly.

There was no doubt upon this point, for the next moment he was seated on the top, looking down upon them.

CHAPTER XV.

THE BILLET DOUX ANSWERED.

"PRESCEELA! *ma belle* Prescoela! your *cher* Antoine is 'ere!" he exclaimed, as he clasped his hands and threw a languishing glance toward Constance Grey.

"Oh, the horrid little wretch!" exclaimed the latter, turning away to conceal her laughter. "I do believe he takes me for Priscilla Hawk!"

"I'm sure he does," whispered Rose.

"Then let him think so," returned Constance; "all the better."

Suddenly an idea struck Rose, and she said:

"Wouldn't it be good fun to give the note to Miss Priscilla, and tell her how distracted the count is about her?"

"Capital! excellent!" exclaimed the rest; "she'll be so delighted, and there's not the least doubt she'll answer it."

At length Constance Grey, having composed her features, looking toward him, said, in a tone of assumed sympathy:

"Unhappy man, what do you want?"

"Vot do I vont?" he re-echoed. "*Hélas!* I vont overseeing; monee, close, boots, but monee of all I vornt my loaf, an'—ha, ha!—I 'ave find 'er!"

With this he jerked himself from his position, and once more came rustling down amongst the ivy to the ground, which having reached, he staggered forward, lost his balance, and sitting down abruptly on his hat, clasped his hands, and gazed fondly at Constance Grey, who was shrieking with laughter, in which her companions joined.

"Ha, ha! you laugh," he said; "I do not mind zat: I do not mind nozing now I 'ave find *ma belle* Prescoela."

"Yes; but, count," Constance replied, speaking as seriously as she could, "do you know, if mamma were to know that I had listened to you, your *belle* Prescoela would get a terrible scolding, all on your account?"

Oh, non, non—no, no!" exclaimed the enthusiastic foreigner, darting forward, sinking on his knee, and seizing her hand in his: "my loaf shall not be scold! 'or Antoine shall protect 'er!"

The audacious count essayed to press the fair fingers he had grasped to his lips, but Constance, who had shuddered vehemently at such close contact with the grimy paw, withdrew her hand abruptly, and the chevalier kissed his own thumb instead.

Miss Grey, having disengaged herself, said to the chevalier, reprovingly:

"Now, Monsieur Exile, you mustn't be silly or misconduct yourself, because if you do we shall be obliged to throw you over the wall."

"Vot! trow me, your loaf, ovare ze wall!" exclaimed the count, in a tone of mingled anguish and surprise. "Oh, you should not be so c-r-r-ruel!"

"Not if you behave yourself," returned Constance.

"I vill—I vill!"

"Very well; then I think you have been here long enough, and I wish you to go."

"Vhere?"

"Home, as soon as possible."

"*Hélas!*" groaned the afflicted refugee. "She tell me to go 'ome—'ome, an' no monee, no vot you call rent. Oh, *misericorde!* my lan'ladee shall kick me out!"

The distressed exile, at this crisis in his despair, clutched his locks with both hands.

"Don't tear your hair, Mr. Exile," said Milly Westlake. "You are not a beauty as it is, and goodness knows what you'd be with a bald head."

"No, pray don't do anything rash," added Constance. "I'm going to get up a subscription for you."

At this intelligence the noble exile cheered up wonderfully, and looked around for his hat.

He at length discovered that he was sitting on it, and that it was crushed flat.

"Oh, *mon pauvre chapeau!*" he exclaimed, dolefully. "But never mind. When my remittance arrive from Paris I shall buy anozer."

While the chevalier endeavored to coax his *pauvre chapeau* into shape, Constance made her appeal to her friends.

"Now, ladies, your purses, if you please, in behalf of the destitute," she exclaimed. "Pity the sorrows of a poor young man, obliged to run away from his mamma without time to pack up such ordinary trifles as a nail-brush."

This appealing description so overpowered the count that he buried his face in his hands.

PRESIDENT GRÉVY OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC.—M. JULES GRÉVY, ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC, JANUARY 30TH.—SEE PAGE 94.

The Jolly Girls being well supplied with money, the subscription amounted to a very fair sum.

Constance then cried:

"Hold your hat, count."

The exile did as he was directed, and Miss Grey threw into it the silver coins she had collected, which instantly dropped through the crown.

The distressed exile gathered them up with enthusiastic gratitude.

"You 'ave save me, ladees!" he cried. "Oh, my loaf!" he added, addressing himself specially to Constance, "it ees to you I owe zis. I shall nevair be able to——"

"Get over the wall!" she interrupted.

"No, no; to tank you for your *générosité*," explained the count.

"No thanks, monsieur. You're very welcome. Good-by."

"Adieu!" returned Exile, with a deep sigh, that tried his coat-buttons severely. "Soon I shall coam again."

"No, no; don't come, write."

"Ah, yes; I shall rite, an' trow se lettair ovare se vall. An' you vill rite to me back again!"

"Of course."

"Oh, zat ees kind. Vhere shall you address to me?—at ze pome-offeece?"

"Oh, no," returned Constance; "that would never do. We must hit upon some surer place than that."

"An idea strikes me," said the count, as he first tapped his forehead, and then pointed to a portion of the wall where the mortar appeared loose. "I shall take out von breek from zere, an' you shall put in se billet. You ondairstand?"

"Perfectly."

"Ha, ha! zen zat is vhere I shall coam for my lettair. Adieu, *mes belles demoiselles*—adieu, adorable Presceela!"

And with another expressive grin of intense devotion the gallant foreigner scrambled up the wall, and after turning round and giving a final wave of his hat at the top, he dropped into the lane and was seen no more.

"So perishes my romantic dream!" exclaimed Constance Grey. "I had painted an ideal hero of grace and beauty, and the reality turns out to be a little, ugly, dirty Frenchman, who looks very much like one of the Commune. It's cruel, isn't it?"

"Oh, never mind!" returned Milly Westlake. "We've had a jolly laugh over the noble little exile, at all events."

"And we shall have some more fun out of the pink *billet-doux* yet," suggested Charlotte Merry.

"Mr. Exile wished particularly that the note and the nosegay should be given to Miss Priscilla," Rose explained; "he said so."

"Oh, she shall have them," returned Milly; "I'll give them to her myself, and say he expects an answer. Come on, girls; I quite long to see her receive the love-tokens."

Eight o'clock came—the hour when the pupils at Meditation House retired to rest.

It was about this time that Pet, the page—who had received his instructions from Milly Westlake, fitted about in the twilight to waylay the fair Priscilla, and found that young lady taking a sentimental stroll in the garden.

The youth in the buttons glided along silently until he reached the spot where the rapt fair one stood with upturned eyes, gazing very intently at nothing, in a state of poetical absorption.

"Oh, Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?" she exclaimed, at length, in impassioned accents.

She was surprised at hearing a voice from the shrubbery ejaculate, in a sharp whisper:

"St! St!"

She started and looked round, but saw no one.

"Who speaks?" she inquired.

"S—h!" was the cautious reply, and almost at the same moment a hand protruded from the bush, holding a small piece of paper twisted up.

Priscilla gazed at the curious object for an instant, and then pounced upon it with a sudden swoop and bore it off eagerly to a more retired part of the garden.

She opened the screwed-up paper with trembling fingers, and at once recognized the handwriting of Milly Westlake.

The communication was brief, but delightfully mysterious and significant. How the gentle creature devoured the words:

"DEAR MISS—What do you think? Oh, no, I'm sure you never would—never could—credit it; yet it is true. I have found another, don't start—you know what—lying on the ground, you can guess where. But this is not all; there is something else. I dare not write more, you know why. Lots to tell you; but must be cautious. From yours mysteriously, YOU KNOW WHO."

If ever Miss Priscilla Hawk was agitated and delighted, pleased and puzzled, perplexed and palpitating, at one and the same time, it was after reading this charmingly indefinite combination of words.

She ran her eyes once more over the paper.

"Oh, yes!" she exclaimed, "there is no doubt about it; I divine the truth. Another dear, delightful pink note has been discovered. But the something else—what, oh, what was that? Be still, my heart. I must seek Milly; she will tell me. I am on thorns of suspense. Oh, Exile! should my dream become realities, in some distant clime, perhaps, beneath azure skies and purple grape-vines, I may yet be permitted to soothe your griefs; and with love's agile fingers fill your silver-mounted meerschaum—yes, dearest, I come, I come!!"

With these words the fair enthusiast with cautious steps hastened toward the sleeping apartment of Milly Westlake.

She tapped lightly at the door, which was at once opened softly, and Milly Westlake looked out.

"You were not asleep, then?" she whispered, eagerly.

"No," returned Milly, with equal caution in her tone; "I waited for you. I thought you'd come. Sh!"

"Dear girl," murmured the grateful sentimentalist, "how can I ever——"

"Sh! We may be overheard."

"True, true; and I have so much—oh, so much to ask you; but not here. Come with me to my room. I can lock the door, and we shall be alone there, dear."

It took but a moment to reach the bed-chamber of Priscilla, and, the door secured, her eagerness, hitherto restrained, gushed forth at once.

"It was you who wrote that charmingly mysterious note, was it not?" she asked, placing her hands on Milly's shoulders with all the *abandon* of the most confidential friendship.

"Yes; extraordinary events have happened," returned Milly; "but first see what we have found."

As she spoke she drew forth the pink note from beneath her wrapper.

The agitated fingers of the elder Miss Hawk literally flew at the epistle, so great was her eagerness to know its contents.

She hastily turned up the lamp, and sinking into a chair, became lost for the present to everything but "lost" and "Exile."

Having read it through for the fourth time she turned to Milly.

"Did you not allude to something else?" she inquired.

"I did," replied Milly, triumphantly producing the bouquet from its hiding-place beneath her robe; "behold!"

Priscilla started up with rapture.

"Flowers!" she exclaimed, in an ecstasy; "delicate floral tributes of devotion! How like his poetical nature! Let me feel them in my grasp."

She took the nosegay from Milly and gazed fondly at the faded specimens of floriculture.

"Dear gift," she murmured, "how charming! How appropriate!" raising the bouquet to her nose; "how awe——"

The fair enthusiast paused.

She could not, even with the utmost stretch of love's fanciful imaginings, finish the words.

(To be continued.)

"Wild Rose and Violet" was commenced in No. 344.

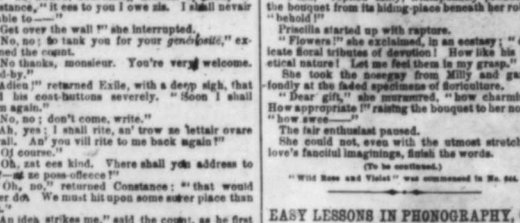
EASY LESSONS IN PHONOGRAPHY, OR SHORT-HAND.

WE need not dwell on the value and advantages of short-hand. Every boy who learns it has a twofold advantage over those who do not, whether he goes to college or at once enters into business-life. The collegian can take down a full report of his professor's lecture, while his fellow-students have only rough and often unintelligible notes.

The young man who goes to learn a business, whether mechanical or commercial, takes down in a moment instructions given, conversations, examinations, details of any machine, method of working, etc. There is no walk in life in which it does not come into play.

It looks difficult to many, but is really easy to acquire.

The following is the phonographic alphabet of Mr. A. J. Graham, which we use with his permission:



The *letters for which* the above signs stand are:

P	B	T	D	Ch	J	K	G
F	V	Th	*Th*	S	Z	*S*	Sh	Zh
L	R	*R*	M	N	Ng	W	Y	H

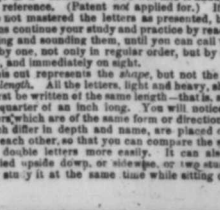
Observe the double consonants, ch, th, sh, zh, ng.

Th is used in words like *think, thought, youth*; *th* in words like *thou, they, them*. One is a light, the other a heavy sound. Sh, in words like *hush, cash*; zh, as in *pleasure, measure*. Curved *R* is used in words *ending* in *R*; straight line *R* when commencing a word, and a vowel follows after. The circle *S* begins or ends a word.

The printed names, Pee Bee, etc., under the signs, are the sounds of the letters, for convenience in talking and writing about them. The naming of signs is called the *nomenclature*; and it is very necessary to attend to that, as well as to the letters for which the signs stand. The great value of the nomenclature in *describing* the Phonography will appear as we proceed with the lessons.

Remember each one of these signs is a part either of a circle, or a straight line, perpendicular, horizontal, or diagonal. Imitate the cut as near as you can, in length and in depth of pressure on the heavy letters. The use of heavy letters simplifies the alphabet, making a few directions answer double purpose. Continue to *repeat* your copying or reading of the signs, sounds and letters (it is well to read aloud as you write), until you can skip about, and by covering up the signs, write them from the print from memory, or covering the print, read the signs. All the *heavy* signs, perpendicular or diagonal, must be written from top to bottom; all the horizon lines, heavy and light, from left to right.

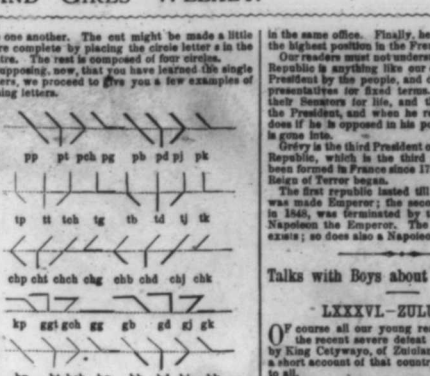
Learn this alphabet thoroughly before you go on. If you learn it in a week, you will do as well as many of the smartest reporters did when they began to learn it. So get around your centre-table and see who learn it first.



Above we give you the Phonographic Alphabet, condensed—in fact, all the consonants in the language in a nutshell. You will find it handy for easy reference. (Patent not applied for.) If you have not mastered the letters as presented, by all means continue your study and practice by reading, writing and sounding them, until you can call them one by one, not only in regular order, but by skipping, and immediately on sight.

This cut represents the *shape*, but not the relative *length*. All the letters, light and heavy, should at first be written of the same length—that is, about one-quarter of an inch long. You will notice the letters which are of the same form or direction, but which differ in depth and name, are placed opposite each other, so that you can compare the single and double letters more easily. It can also be studied upside down, or side-ways, or two students may study it at the same time while sitting opposite one another. The cut might be made a little more complete by placing the circle letter *s* in the centre. The rest is composed of four circles.

Supposing, now, that you have learned the single letters, we proceed to give you a few examples of joining letters.


pp pt pch pg pb pd pj pk
tp tt tch tg tb td tj tk
chp cht chch chg chb chd chj chk
kp kt kch kg kb kd kj kk
gp gt gch gg gb gd gj gk
hp ht hch hg hb hd hj hk

In like manner, take some ruled paper, and pen (which is better than pencil), and write the following, which you will see is a continuance of the order in the second cut, commencing with p, etc., joining the next letter on the right, until we come around to the letter from which we started. Let the first perpendicular letter come down to the line, and the rest follow. If horizontal, let the *second* letter rest on the line. Write:

dp, dt, dch, dg, db, dd, dj, dk,
jp, jt, jch, jg, jb, jd, jj, jk,
kp, kt, kch, kg, kb, kd, kj, kk,
pn, tn, chn, kn, bn, dn, jn,
pn, tn, chn, kn, bn, dn, jn,
ptn, tth, chth, kth, bth, dth, jth,
ps, ts, chs, ks, bs, ds, js, etc.

It would be easier, perhaps, if a hyphen (-) were placed between the single and the double letters, but if you are familiar with the alphabet you need not make a mistake, and try to write *three* letters in the above instead of two.

Now, let us skip a little, and write three letters together.

kmt, mnt, mlt, ltn, ntl, tln,
tkt, mkt, nkt, kpl, ttl, rnt,
rnt, sup, shrp, lrn, hng, etc.

The proper place for using the two kinds of R, sh, and circle S, will be fully explained in our next. A good long drill on the letters will do you immense service before you take up the vowels to make words. So take the examples above, and practice, practice, until you can read the letters at sight, and write them from dictation.

(To be continued.)

PRESIDENT GREVY, OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC.

FRANCOIS PAUL JULES GRÉVY was elected President of the French Republic on January 30th last. The circumstances which led to this election formed what the French people called a crisis. Marshal MacMahon, the former President, who had occupied the presidential chair since the resignation of Thiers, the first President of France, which occurred May 24th, 1873, had resigned the office because the Assembly of France had decided certain questions adversely to his opinions. MacMahon's duty was to sign the Act of the Assembly; his own opinion was against it, and he escaped from the dilemma by resigning.

In France the President is elected by the Chamber of Deputies, and not by the people at large, as in our own country, and when MacMahon's resignation was read by Monsieur Grévy, who was the president of the Assembly, the Chamber proceeded to elect a successor. Anticipations of this event had been had for several days, and there were a number of prominent candidates. The election resulted in the choice of Monsieur Grévy, who obtained 536 votes out of a total of 676. His only competitor was General de Chanzy, who received 99 votes, the rest being blank. With his election the rule of the soldier ended and the rule of the civilian began.

Monsieur Grévy was born at Montsous, Vaudren, in the Department of the Jura, August 15, 1813. He was educated at the College of Poligny, after which he studied law in Paris. Shortly after he finished his law studies, the revolution of July, 1830, broke out, in which he took part and was one of the combatants who captured the Babylone Barracks. With the return of peace he resumed his law practice, and soon became distinguished in defending political prisoners, and especially those of his companions of Barbes, who were tried in 1839.

The revolution of 1848 again called him before the public, and he acted as Commissary of the Provisional Government in the Jura, giving general satisfaction by his prudent and conciliatory conduct. His popularity was so great that he was then elected to the Constituent Assembly of 1848. Amongst his first votes were those cast in favor of the abolition of capital punishment, and for the banishment of the Orleans family.

Monsieur Grévy served in the Assembly on the Committee on Justice, and acted as Vice-President. He was a frequent and fluent speaker, and was a radical republican. He introduced an amendment to the French Constitution making the president liable to removal by the Assembly, but it was defeated. Grévy feared that Napoleon, who was then president, would seize the power, as he did in December, 1851.

When Louis Napoleon thus became Emperor, Grévy retired to the practice of his profession, and remained in private life till 1869, when he was again selected to represent his native department in the legislative body, then called the Corps Legislatif.

After the downfall of the Imperial Government, in 1870, he was again sent to the National Assembly, as it was called, in 1871, of which he became the president. He was retained in this position by eight consecutive and almost unanimous re-elections, until April 30, 1873, when he resigned.

In November, 1873, he opposed the establishment of the Septennate in favor of MacMahon. In March, 1875, he was recalled to his old post of President of the Assembly, was re-elected in July, 1876, and again in October, 1877, remaining continuously in the same office. Finally, he is now advanced to the highest position in the French nation.

Our readers must not understand that the French Republic is anything like our own. We elect our President by the people, and our Senators and Representatives for fixed terms. The French elect their Senators for life, and the Assembly elects the President, and when he resigns, as he always does if he is opposed in his policy, a new election is gone into.

Grévy is the third President of the present French Republic, which is the third republic which has been formed in France since 1793, when the terrible Reign of Terror began.

The first republic lasted till the Great Napoleon was made Emperor; the second republic, formed in 1848, was terminated by the making of Louis Napoleon the Emperor. The third republic still exists; so does also a Napoleon.

Talks with Boys about Foreign Lands.

LXXXVI.—ZULULAND.

OF course all our young readers have heard of the recent severe defeat of the British troops by King Cetywayo, of Zululand, and consequently a short account of that country will be interesting to all.

The Zulus, Zooloos, or Omazooloos, as they are sometimes called, constitute a branch of the Caffre tribe, but are greatly superior to the latter race in point of intelligence, build and organization. They live chiefly in the elevated country between Natal and Delagoa Bay, but many of them are to be found within the bounds of the Colony of Natal.

They are a handsome race, and appear to occupy an intermediate place between the negro and a higher type. Their complexions are brown, and their features are more regular than those of the pure negro, but their hair is very woolly. They are tall and graceful in figure, and noted for their strength and activity. With the exception of local differences, the habits, language, and manners of the Zulus are similar to those of other Caffre tribes.

Under a chieftain of the name of Chaka they overran the country as far as the borders of Natal.

Chaka was succeeded by his half-brother Dingan, and the latter by Panda, a full-brother of Chaka. Under these chieftains the Zulus had a regular military organization, their forces being divided into bands of one thousand men each, and each band or regiment being distinguished by different-colored shields. It is said that they can put about 50,000 warriors in the field.

Zululand proper, the vast region under the government of the present revolted chief Cetywayo (pronounced Ketahwayo) is inhabited by some 350,000 natives, who are universally admitted to be the finest and most powerful race of South Africa. In saying that the Zulus are a branch of the Caffre tribe, it must be distinctly understood that Caffre is not properly a term of nationality, but an Arabic word, signifying "infidel." There are Caffres and a Caffre-land in the south of Afghanistan, but they must not be confounded with the African races we are speaking about. The Caffres are divided into many tribes, and are distinguished by various tribal names, such as Jaikas, Galekas, Fingos, and Pandos, the latter being the most familiar term for the people of the region known as Caffraria.

King Unpandi, or Panda, the father of Cetywayo, died six or eight years ago, and after the death of the king the sons of the late monarch and the head men of the Zulu nation sent messengers to the Governor of Natal, saying that the nation found itself wandering because of the death of the king. There was no king, they said, and the messengers brought from the Zulu nation four oxen representing the "head of the king." They desired that an English official should preside at Cetywayo's coronation, and he, their future king, desired to be friends with Great Britain. Subsequently, on the day of the installation, these laws were formally proclaimed:

(1) That the indiscriminate shedding of blood should cease in the land.

(2) That no Zulu should be condemned without open trial and the public examination of witnesses, for and against, and that he should have a right of appeal to the king.

(3) That no Zulu's life should be taken without the previous knowledge and consent of the king after such trial had taken place, and the right of appeal had been allowed to be exercised.

(4) That for minor crimes, the loss of property, all or apportion, should be substituted for the punishment of death.

These laws were not kept, and ultimately led to the present dispute between Cetywayo and the British.

Cetywayo, as we have already stated, can call a formidable army into the field.

His forces may be said to include the whole male strength of the Zulu nation. At intervals of from three to two years all the lads who have during that time attained the age of fourteen or fifteen years are formed into a regiment, which, after a year's probation, is sent to a military kraal. When the regiment is a strong one—that is, when five years have elapsed since the last levy—they form a corps by themselves; when it is a weak one, it is amalgamated with one of the old existing regiments. Thus, although some corps are composed almost entirely of men about the same age, others contain a mixture of old and young men.

At present there are, in all, fourteen corps, or regiments. They vary in strength from the Udukusa corps, which consists but of one regiment, numbering five hundred men, to the Undi, which contains five regiments, and numbers 5,000 men. The total strength of the trained fighting force of men under sixty years of age is put down at 40,400. Of these 22,500 are between twenty and thirty years of age, 10,000 between thirty and forty, 3,400 between forty and fifty, and 4,500 between fifty and sixty years old. How grievously this military service must bear upon the people, and how great must be the check given to the increase of population, may be judged by the fact that the king does not allow his soldiers to marry until leave is given to the whole regiment to do so, and this is not generally granted until the age of the men averages forty years.

According to this there are 32,500 unmarried men in Zululand, all under the age of forty, and only 7,900 married men, all between the ages of forty and sixty.

As leave is given to regiments which have specially distinguished themselves in war to marry under the usual age, the system in force tends to make the whole of the active men of the nation eager for war, and renders them extremely dangerous and quarrelsome neighbors. It is claimed that this fact has greatly necessitated the present war.

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Floating to Fortune;
Or,
Which was the Hero.

Inventive Ben;
Or,
How a Boy Became a Jack-of-all-Trades and Master, Too,
And
Wild Rose and Violet;
Or,
Fun at Mrs. Hawk's.

In this week we begin "EASY LESSONS IN PHONOGRAPHY," "SKETCHES OF EMINENT MEN OF OUR TIMES." Our "TALKS WITH BOYS ABOUT FOREIGN LANDS" give a capital account of Zululand.

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THE ROUND TABLE.

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For the next best	2.50
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2.—R. B. Howard, New Orleans, La.

3.—S. Callan, 39 Mott Street, New York.

ENIGMAS, CHARADES, ETC.

1.—DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

INITIALS and finals, if rightly made,
Will each name a well-known trade.

This is a gem that you often see;
A Southern State my next will be;
A mechanic and novelist, as you choose;
This is something he must often use;
Easily vexed this word will mean;
This part of speech is often seen;
This as a procoon is deemed,
And this a long-legged bird you'll find.
And swayed by this we're often blind.

2.—LOGOGRIPH.

To the depository of millions if you fifty add,
Then nothing will remain—a thought to make you sad.

3.—SQUARE WORDS.

'Tis accomplished by the tooth,
And worshiped by the most uncouth;
Go down to this without disgrace;
A great man exiled in this place.

4.—CHARADE.

I first an Irishman bearing second on high,
And admired the steam whole which they nowadays try.

5.—DECAPITATION.

First is a luscious, juicy fruit,
I dare say liked by you;
Behead me, and a kind of seed
Will now appear to view;
Again bring forth the ax and block,
And—what a curious thing!—
Instead of flowers or fruit, from seed
An animal will spring.

6.—CHARADE.

A friend and I one day
Took a long country walk,
And we beguiled the way
By many a cheerful talk.
We hungry felt at last,
As well as parched with thirst,
So round our eyes we cast
In search of a meal *first*.
A house we soon did note,
And JACK exclaimed with glee—
"Here is a table d'hôte,
And we're in time, I see.
It is a famous place,
And suits my appetite;
I'll eat just what I can,
And pay no more—all right!"
So having sat him down,
He last away in style,
Till I began to frown
('Twas quite beyond a smile),
And said—"your greed is great,
But is, I fear, my whole,
I'll never be your mate
In such another stroll."

7.—DIAMOND PUZZLE.

An article; an insect; many-eyed; heavenly; a flower; what the bee does; a hundred.

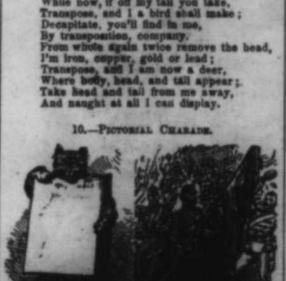
8.—SQUARE WORDS.

To hold tight; a cutting instrument; blue; regretful; captures.

9.—LOGOGRIPH.

A line, account, or scratch, I ween,
Twenty of each I still might mean;
The state of play I'll tell to you,
At cricket, cards, and billiards, too.
Deprive me of my serpent head,
And you shall make a centre dead;
While now, if off my tail you take,
Transpose, and I a bird shall make;
Decapitate, you'll find in me,
By season, order, company.
From whole again twice remove the head,
I'm iron, copper, gold or lead;
Transpose, and I am now a deer,
Where body, head, and tail appear;
Take head and tail from me away,
And naught at all I can display.

10.—PICTORIAL CHARADE.



First Part. Third Part.

Second Part. The Whole.

FUN FOR THE BOYS.

JOHN BULLINGS'S PHILOSOPHY.—When I was a young man, I was always in a hurry to hold the big end of the log, and do all the lifting; now, I am older, I seize hold of the small end and do all the grunting. Wise men make the mistakes and fools the blunders, and this is about all the difference between them.

"PA, what is meant by paradise?" "Paradise, my son," replied the father, gloomily—"paradise, my son, is the latter part of next summer, when your mother goes on a visit to your grandmother."

COASTING.

The boys were coasting down Sycamore Street hill one evening when John Sanscript and his wife came along. They had been up on Baltimore Street, visiting, and were on their way home.

"Just see them boys, now," said John, as he braced up at the intersection of Mulberry Street. "It really reminds me of the days when I was a lad. Do you know, Jane, that I used to coast down hill on a sled that way?"

"Did you, John?"

"Why, yes; but that's fifty years ago!"

Sanscript scratched his head contemplatively, and then mutters, *sotto voce*:

"Darn my granddaddy's button's, if I don't try it!"

"Try what, dear?" anxiously asked Mrs. S.

"I'm going to coast just once, to revive the recollections of fifty year ago."

"Now, John, if I were you——"

"But you are not me, so don't interfere. Here, sonny!—to a lad who had just puffed up the hill with his sled—"here, sonny, I'll give you a quarter to let me slide down on your sled once."

The bargain was eagerly nailed and clinched.

"Be kwertul, old man," urged the boy, as Sanscript squatted rather awkwardly on the sled; "be kwertul, I say, and don't let her flunk one way or t'other till she brings up or you'll git mashed."

"Never mind, younker," assured John; "I've been here afore—some years afore, but——"

But what will never be known, for just then the sled, of its own accord, started down the hill, and even John himself has not been able to recall what he was about to observe. The surprise at the sled's unexpected movement was general.

"Look out!" yelled the boy.

"Oh, John!" screamed Mrs. Sanscript.

"Whoa, there!" yelled John.

But the sled wouldn't whoa. It seemed to have set off down that hill to beat its best time. John had chance only to clutch hold of both sides and hold his breath for fear the wind would blow off the top of his head. The only thought he had time to foster was that the boy must have greased the sled's runners as a practical joke. And, if the was coasting, he had never coasted, if his recollection served him right. Two-thirds way down the hill the sled struck an ice-hummock, and immediately its course was changed to a parabolic curve. Whack! bang! crash! clink! The bringing-up was awfully sudden and uncertain. Sanscript and the sled disappeared as abruptly as a shooting-star. The latter lay shivered to atoms against a lamp-post, and Sanscript lay shivering in the grocery cellar just opposite. When the off runner of the sled collided with the lamp-post and stopped the vehicle, Sanscript rose like a circus-leaper and went right on, turning twenty somersaults to the second. He went through the grocery window as the circus-leaper goes through a paper hoop. The grocer appeared soon after and compromised upon John paying the following bill: Window sash, $10; crushed cheese, $12; hogshead molasses, $48.30; Christmas goods, $1.16. Total, $71.36. Then the boy came in with a bill of $5 for his sled, to say nothing of the loss of a suit of clothes, a surgeon's bill for plastering smoky skinned surfaces, and the bill of a hackman who conveyed the fainting wife home. In the cooler moments of afterthought Sanscript reckoned it up, and discovered that it had cost him $109.78 to recall recollections of fifty years ago, and required but one minute and five seconds of old Father Time in which to do the recollecting.

"SUPPOSE," said a lawyer to a witness he was trying to badger, recently—"suppose I should tell you that I could bring a dozen men of your own town to this court-room who would say they would not believe you on oath, what would you say?" And calmly the witness made reply: "I would say you lied!" A gentle smile diffused itself all over the court-room, and the unruffled witness stepped down.

HE was a new apprentice, just put at the case, and when he collided with the word "gumboil" in his copy, he brought the manuscript to the editor and asked him if he didn't mean gum-bile? Ten years hence he may be the editor and sole proprietor of a patent outside newspaper, and writing financial editorials under the head of "Pay Up—We Want Money."

RECENTLY a very modest Boston young lady, who wanted a pair of garters, addressed the shopman thus: "It is my desire to obtain a pair of circular elastic suspendangs, capable of being contracted or expanded by means of oscillating burnished steel apparatuses that sparkle like particles of gold-leaf set with Alaska diamonds, and which are utilised for retaining in proper position the habiliments of the lower extremities, which innate delicacy forbids me to mention."

WHY are persons fatigued like a wheel? Because they are tired.

MADE A DIFFERENCE.

Saturday forenoon a young man of about twenty, nearly enveloped in a linen duster, was wandering through Detroit City Hall with his Mary Ann, and he was several times overheard to say:

"Mary, I'd die for you—would, for a fact."

After seeing the various rooms he left her on the steps while he hunted round for a place to buy sodawater. In crossing the street he was run into by a velocipede, and he got up yelling like an Indian. The officer on duty at the hall ran down and asked him if he was hurt.

"Hurt? I'm all mashed to kindlings!" was the reply.

"But I heard you say you were willing to die for the girl in the gray dress up there."

"I don't keer a penny what ye heard!" exclaimed the young man, as he danced around on one leg; "I want you to understand that there's just as much difference 'tween dying for a gal you love and collidin' with a two-wheeled sulky as there is 'tween a three-cent mouth-organ and a brass band of angels! I want to begin a lawsuit right off!"

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AT CLOSE QUARTERS WITH A BOA-CONSTRICTOR.

"AY, ay, sir, I've had a taste o' things in my time, too; and they ain't none so pleasant, neither—not till you gets used to 'em—are they now? But the queerest scrape o' that sort as ever I got into was just after we first went out, and this was the way it happened:

"Directly we got into Bombay we was packed off up-country, part by rail and part on foot, till we got to our new quarters—a little bit of an outlyin' station on the Upper Ganges, with a crack-jaw name as I can't recollect, and couldn't pronounce if I did—and a sweet place it was, by jingo! all mud barrin' the trees, all trees barrin' the mud; and all musquitoes together. Then, by way of makin' things nice and com'fable, we got there just in the height of the hot season; and as if that warn't enough—we'd just had new shoes served out to us, and mine was so jolly tight that I felt just like standin' on tiptoes in a teacup! Oh, didn't I just wish myself back in old England agin, nineteen times a day! but, d'ye see, if a man wants to have everything cut out soft and smooth for him, he's no call to give the service at all; and if he does, his best game's just to grin and bear it. And so did we.

"But there was one man among us didn't seem to mind it a bit, and that was our commanding officer, Major the Hon. Edward M——, as maybe you've heerd on. He got his step in time o' the Sikh war, at Subraon, where all the senior officers o' the regiment was bowled over all at once; but he didn't get nothin' more nor what he deserved, no, nor half as much, neither. He was a man, if ever there was one, and as good an officer—and as kindhearted a one, too—as ever stepped in shoe-leather. Why, bless you, it 'ud ha' done your heart good to see him in the middle of a thunderin' hard day's work (when everythin' was a-goin' wrong, and we was all gruntin' and growlin' under our breath) turn round to us with as jolly a face as if he'd been a-eatin' of his dinner, and say: 'My lads,' he'd say, 'this 'll be sometin' to laugh over by-and-by, when it's all done!' And when we'd see him so jolly over it and pickin' out the very worst o' the work for hisself, 'stead o' shovin' it all upon us, like some as I've seen—him, as had been reared, so to speak, on the fat o' the land, and fed with a silver spoon, like—we couldn't for very shame hang back and make faces over it. My chum, Tom Jackson, used to say as the major freshened us up more than a double ration o' liquor all round; and he did, too, and no mistake. For, mark ye, we privates ain't such precious fools as some folks make us out—we can tell what sort o' man we're under, as well as any 'ose with his rider; and when we feels as there's a man over us as can remember that we're flesh and blood like hisself, and treat us like men, and not like dogs, we'll go anywhere and do anythin' for him—blowed if we won't!

"Now I should tell you, sir, as one o' the major's ways was gettin' up as early as early could be, and goin' all over the place afore sun-up; and no matter how late he might ha' been the night afore (when there was a jollification at mess, or anythin' o' that sort) as sure as mornin' came, there he was as fresh as a cricket, and never missin' a bit of his round. For, d'ye see, he was that sort o' a chap that he'd never be satisfied without he'd seen, with his very own two eyes, as how everythin' was a-goin' as it should be; and I wish there was more of his sort about, I do.

"Well, one mornin' when the sun was just a-peepin' over the tree-tops, and everythin' still cool and pleasant, I sees the major a-comin' back from his walk. But 'stead o' goin' at a good steady pace, like he gen'lly did, he was a-spankin' along like any postman, and in he comes among us hot foot, and sings out:

"'My lads, I've got a job for you. Six of you take your arms and come with me.'

"We all on us came for'ard at once, for we knowed as he wouldn't send us nowhere where he didn't mean to go himself; and when men once know that, you can lead 'em anywhere. He picks out me and Tom Jackson, and four more, and away we goes with sloped arms like on parade, and him a-leadin' on us.

"As he hadn't said nothin' 'bout what work he wanted us for, I warn't quite sure if it'd be right to ax him; but he'd spoken to me several times already, off and on, and I knowed him for one as 'ud always give a civil answer to a civil question; so, when we'd tramped a spell without a word spoken anywhere, I says:

"'Axin' your honor's pardon,' says I to him, 'what is this here job as we're bound on, if I make so bold?' says I.

"'Well, my man,' says he, 'it's nothing very glorious,' he says, 'but there'll be some fighting in it, for all that. The fact is, I've spotted a big snake close by here, and I don't choose to have him loafing about the place, and perhaps snapping some of you up when you're not thinking of it, so I just mean to settle him at once. He was asleep when I saw him, so if we can finish him before he gets his nap out, so much the better.'

"At that we all grinned like anything, thinking it no end of a spree; for, you see, after stickin' in this out-o'-the-way hole no long without a bit of fun, anything in the way of a lark was reg'lar nuts to us. So for'ard we went, briskly enough all round the cantonments, because the scrub had been cleared away, and we had plain ground to walk on. But when we got to the edge of the jungle, where there was a path cut, as it might be, 'bout the breadth o' that 'ere little table by the window yonder, the major pulls up for a minute, and says to us, says he:

"'Now, my men, you must be as quiet as you can, for if we can pin this beggar before he wakes up we shall have an easier bargain of him.'

"Well, of course, when the major give the word, we all closed our talking-trap and began to force our way through the bush. If you've ever been out our way you don't need me to tell you what an Indian jungle is. We were all pretty well used to the work, and made our way through with no more noise than we could help.

"The major, as he always did when there was any danger afoot, went on first. We had advanced several yards, and was beginning to think there wasn't any snake there, when all of a sudden we heard a sharp hiss, and the next moment an immense speckled body was thicker than a man's thigh.

"We were all pretty well scared, I must say, but of course we weren't going to go back on the major. "After the serpent got that blow on his head, his eyes seemed to light up as if they'd borrowed some of Old Nick's fire. Coiling himself up like a wheel, and hissing in a way that showed he meant business, Mr. Boa-constrictor made ready for another spring. The major knew his tactics too well to wait for the second attack. Grasping his rifle with nerves as strong as the steel of his bayonet, he made one

AT CLOSE QUARTERS WITH A BOA CONSTRICTOR.—"GRASPING HIS RIFLE WITH NERVES AS STRONG AS THE STEEL OF HIS BAYONET, HE MADE ONE JUMP FORWARD, AND RAN HIS BAYONET THROUGH THE SERPENT'S NECK."

wolf (not the comparatively harmless coyote of the West), and even the panther. The Summer of 1850 was a hard one in that desolate region for man and beast. Crops of all kinds, even maat, failed.

As the Fall passed off Winter approached, the deer actually came near the cabin in midday, driven by hunger. Rumors came from the far-off farms that the wolves, gaunt and hunger-bitten, had attacked the cattle in the barns.

In early December Jan was sent for by John Supplee, a farmer living about ten miles down the range. Supplee had fallen and broken his leg, and Jan, who had a good deal of medical skill, was the only person who could bandage it properly.

"You will come with me, Maria," he said to his wife, "so that in case I cannot come back before night you can bring the cart and ox home."

Maria kissed the children good-by.

"I will be back before sundown," she said. "You can have the supper ready, Greta, and Peter may milk the cow."

The children spent the day quietly at work in building a house for their hens. The sun was going down before they thought it was noon. Peter ran to milk the cow, and Greta to put the bacon to fry and the cake in the covered skillet among the hot ashes.

Peter was fifteen, and a stout boy of his age. He sat now shivering and whimpering in the corner like a scared baby.

"Mother is dead! He has killed her!" he cried.

"Who would kill mother? I'll go and find her. Come! Do something, Peter!" said plucky little Greta, tugging at the latch with her shaking fingers.

"Do! What can anybody do when the spirits are out?"

He crouched on the floor and hid his eyes, then started up.

"I know what I'll do. They are hungry. In Norway we always set out a meal for them on Winter nights. My father never has done it here."

There was a haunch of venison hanging to the rafter, but half dried. The boy laid it in front of the fire until it began to crackle and burn. Greta knelt on the hearth watching it. She knew that this was the way in which the angry spirits that filled the mountains of Norway were appeased; but she thought they had left all these terrible creatures behind them.

Peter took up the smoking meat, carried to the edge of the woods, threw it down and ran back, his teeth chattering with terror.

"Come away from the window!" he cried to Greta. "It is death if you look at them."

He threw himself flat on the bed. But presently the little girl crept to the window.

"Surely mother is coming. And they can't see me, anyhow, through this chink," she thought.

The moon had risen, and threw a spectral light over the open space and the dark woods beyond. Little did the poor boy think that while appeasing the anger of imaginary spirits, he was whetting the appetites of creatures far more formidable. What were those black, shadowy shapes tearing at the meat? The child's blood grew cold in her veins.

The spirits were indeed there! They left the meat. They crept stealthily to the house.

"Wolves! wolves!" she shrieked. "They are climbing in at the windows!"

"Wolves!"

Peter, with one leap, reached the gun. He gave quick, convulsive shouts, as a boy is apt to do with great excitement.

Wolves! He could kill a hundred wolves! A different thing from spirits! He had just time to close the heavy shutter as the fierce beasts reached the window. The door was already shut. Greta drew the great bar across it. The kitchen was full of the smoke of the roasting meat, and the smell maddened the famished beasts, who each had tasted but a morsel of the flesh. There was a window in the wash-shed, for which there was no shelter.

"They will not find it," whispered Greta. "The bushes cover it."

The children crept noiselessly into the shed, carrying the guns with them, their eyes fixed on the square open hole, for which they had no defense. The barking and yelps of the wolves were at the other side of the house. But suddenly a crash was heard among the bushes, and one, two, a dozen heads appeared at the open window. Peter fired. There was a yelp from two that were hit, and the pack retreated for a moment. The next moment, the whole pack, discovering the opening, rushed to that side of the house. The window was full of the gleaming eyes, and fierce, open jaws. Again and again the boy fired, his sister loading the guns for him. But they were too slow. One great, gaunt wolf leaped through the opening. The others tore at each other in their fury to pass. Without was a dark howling mass.

"To the loft! to the loft!" shrieked Peter, retreating, still firing, toward the ladder. But Greta, gone mad with terror, as he thought, rushed past the wolf, seizing a box in which she kept her wax doll, her Sunday ribbons—all her most sacred treasures. It was a heavy box, but she lifted it and carried it to the ladder. The wolf sprang at the boy, but Peter had the strength of two men that night. He dealt him a stunning blow on the skull with the butt end of his gun, and had reached the ladder before he recovered. By the time the children gained the loft, the kitchen was filled with a furious, snarling pack.

"If I could cut away the ladder! If I had a hatchet or a knife!" cried Peter.

"There is no way to keep them down!"

He stood in the trap-door, dealing blow after blow with his gun. They had left the powder and shot below. The boy's strength was going; the open-mouthed beasts were endeavoring, by means of the ladder, to leap into the loft. He looked at Greta, who was kneeling before her box, taking out her gilt-clasped Bible. No wonder the child had gone mad. She sprang to her feet at last. Peter, seeing what she held in her hand, gave a wild yell. The fireworks, the precious crackers, and candles, and torpedoes, which their father had bought from the peddler, to fire off on Christmas Day!

"A match! Ach, mein Gott, it we have no match!"

But there was one in the depths of Peter's pocket, and the next minute a small red mass was lowered into the midst of the pack. They stopped to sniff at it. Then there was an explosion. The big torpedoes went off like cannons. The crackers hissed and sputtered. A dazzling glare of red and blue lights filled the room. Pop! Bang! bang! Yells of terror from the wolves, shrieks of triumph from Peter. In less than a minute the burned and frightened pack had cleared the window and halted in the yard. Peter ran down the ladder, flung another box of blazing crackers among them, and followed it up by more bullets.

The children at last found means to barricade the window, and did not dare to open it until the sun was up.

Their father and mother returned soon after dawn. Maria, finding the road blocked by the fallen trees, had been forced to go back to Supplee's. Jan and she had walked home across the hills in the night, full of anxious forebodings about the children.

Peter Jansen is now a middle-aged man, but he is never tired of telling of the night when he and Greta fought the evil spirits with fire-crackers.

"Quiet, quiet, good Spry!" cried Peter, patting the white spot in her forehead; "mother is coming, and I have not done my work."

Spry stood still. The milk was strained and put away in the brown crocks. The cake was baked and waited, smoking by the fire, but mother had not come.

"What is that, Peter?"

Greta grew white as she caught his arm. It was a rushing, roaring, hissing noise, which filled the whole air; then followed by a deafening, prolonged crash, like thunder. Then there was silence.

The sky was blue, the setting sun warm. The birds were twittering their last good-nights before the darkness fell. The two children stood trembling at the door.

"It is an evil spirit," said Peter, promptly; for the Jansens had taken all their native superstitions with them. "We have made him angry in some way. Come in and shut the door."

The crash had brought more trouble to the children than could any angry spirit. It was a tornado, which had crossed the mountains five miles to the south, tearing up great oaks by the roots, heaping the ravines with rocks and fallen trees. It had crossed the road on which their mother, in the cart, was slowly driving the ox.

PETER AND THE WOLVES.

ABOUT thirty years ago a Norwegian, named Jan Jansen, came to this country, and settled in the backwoods of what was then old Virginia, clearing a farm in the mountain wilderness near the Cheat River.

These mountain fastnesses were then, as, indeed, they are still, tenanted by the bear, the great gray jump forward, ran his bayonet through the serpent's neck, and pinned him to the ground.

"Perhaps there wasn't any hissing and squirming! Oh, no! But it wasn't any use, for the major held him there, and before he could squirm himself loose, we were atop of him, clubbing him right and left. We had a pretty hard job of it, but we fixed him at last, and you may be sure we weren't sorry when we saw him give his last squirm.

"After we had got through the morning's work, we carried the body to the camp, and you ought to have seen the the men open their eyes when they saw it! The doctor took his hide off and stuffed it, and the major hung him up in his quarters, where he didn't make such a very bad ornament, especially to them as had anything to do with the killing."